

DEVELOPMENT OF A TRAINING COURSE AT
CANAL FULTON CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
FOR DIVINE HEALING MINISTRY

Douglas L. Dill

B.A., College of Wooster, 1979
M.A., Ashland Theological Seminary, 1989

Mentor

Jon Mark Ruthven, Ph.D.

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Jon Mark Ruthven

Date: _____

Approved:

Faculty Mentor:

Associate Dean of Doctoral Studies

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ABSTRACT

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The motivation for this study was an event in which the emotional health of the researcher was restored by divine healing prayer. The objective of this study was to determine whether a seven-week training course in divine healing ministry would result in the participants praying for the sick more often with the laying on of hands, and that they would be better equipped to do so. The researcher used a qualitative method which included a pre-test and post-test, participant journals, and interviews. A minority of participants reported increased frequency of healing prayer and almost all reported being better equipped.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am eternally grateful to God for the gift of salvation, a gift which includes restoration of spirit, soul and body. It would be impossible to count the number of times He has touched me with healing power.

I wish to thank my wife Annie for her patience and my daughter Bethany for her computer expertise.

I want to express appreciation to Dr. Randy Clark and Dr. Tom Jones and the staff of Global Awakening for their leadership in healing ministry and for their gracious hospitality. It has been a privilege to be one of the Randy Clark Scholars. The experience has been one of the highlights of my life.

I want to give thanks to Dr. Jon Ruthven and Dr. Luther Oconer for helping me to grasp the nature of the New Covenant. I will not forget your passion for the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

It has been a great pleasure to experience three years of fellowship with the members of our peer group. The prayers and counsel of these men have been a source of healing and deliverance.

I am indebted to the project participants and staff of Canal Fulton Christian Fellowship for their willingness to support a training course in divine healing ministry. It was a great pleasure to learn from one another under the Holy Spirit's direction.

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my wife Annie. Because of you I have experienced a taste of heaven here on earth.

ABBREVIATIONS

CFCF	Canal Fulton Christian Fellowship
C&MA	Christian and Missionary Alliance
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament

INTRODUCTION

For centuries in the churches of North America and Europe, the person who lays hands on the sick in the name of Jesus, expecting them to be healed, has been regarded as an unusual creature. Depending on the theological persuasion of the observer, one who ministers divine healing might be regarded as a dinosaur, a unicorn, or a hole-in-one.¹ The practitioner of divine healing has sometimes been seen as a dinosaur, that is to say that such a ministry really existed in Bible times but no longer exists today. The dinosaur outlook views divine healing ministry as illegitimate at best and deceptive at worst.

The Christian who lays hands on the sick has been seen by others as something like a unicorn, which is to say that no one has ever lived who actually did healing miracles, including Bible characters. Therefore these observers consider that the contemporary minister of divine healing does not operate in the realm of reality. If someone is sick, the only hope of recovery lies in medical intervention. In the third case, many Christians in North America and in Europe view prayer for the sick with the laying on of hands to be like a hole-in-one. This is to say that they view such ministry as a legitimate activity like golf, but that the probability of healing is similar to a hole-in-one. Recovery of the sick person is not impossible, but certainly is not likely.

This low view of divine healing ministry is still pervasive in Europe and North America, but it is not the norm in the remainder of the world. Rather, the situation is completely reversed. Divine healing ministry is widely accepted, even dominant, almost

¹ In this project, the term divine healing will be preferred over terms such as faith healing. The purpose is to maintain emphasis on God as the giver of healing.

everywhere else across the globe. Mark Noll contends that new Christian communities of all types (Roman Catholic, Anglican, Baptist, Presbyterian, and independent) around the world have something in common. They are all “Pentecostal in a broad sense of the term.”² Gotthard Oblau reports that Chinese Christians informed him that more than 80% of new believers followed Jesus as a result of a healing experience in their own lives or because of a healing experience in their family.³

How has divine healing ministry come to be regarded as a fringe activity in one part of the body of Christ while it is widely practiced and highly valued in the remainder of the body? The people who regard divine healing as a unicorn have been very influential in North America and Europe. This project will refer to them as antsupernaturalists. Antsupernaturalists are in agreement with Rudolf Bultmann who said, “We cannot use electric lights and radios and, in the event of illness, avail ourselves of modern medical and clinical means and at the same time believe in the spirit and wonder world of the New Testament.”⁴ Bultmann might be surprised that most followers of Jesus around the world today do not hesitate to do the very thing which Bultmann considered impossible. The antsupernaturalist view is a minority opinion already in the global church and shrinking further at a rapid rate. This project will highlight ministries around the world today which reject Bultmann’s worldview and which observe the “wonder world of the New Testament” manifested on a regular basis.

² Mark Noll, *The New Shape of World Christianity*, (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009), 34.

³ Gotthard Oblau, “Divine Healing and the Growth of Practical Christianity in China” in *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing*, ed. Candy Brown (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), 308.

⁴ Rudolf Bultmann, *New Testament and Mythology* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1984), 4.

Those who regard divine healing as a dinosaur are referred to in this project as cessationists. Cessationists regard healing and miracles as phenomena that ended when the Apostles died or, at the latest, that such phenomena ended with the formation of the New Testament canon. Benjamin B. Warfield would probably be the best known champion of the cessationist position. Warfield holds that New Testament teaching does not support the continuation of miraculous spiritual gifts and that church history testifies to the disappearance of such gifts.⁵ This project will refute both of Warfield's basic objections, particularly in chapter three. Divine healing ministry is well supported by scripture. The Bible simply does not teach that healing would cease to operate as a spiritual gift prior to the return of Christ. Also, divine healing through the laying on of hands never disappeared from the ministry of the church through the centuries. There may have been many times when it was uncommon, but it never ceased. The limited number of healing testimonies in certain times is better explained by the neglect of the church than by the plan of God.

Because divine healing is biblical, because it has been successfully ministered in the past and present, and because it is theologically sound, there is no reason why it should not have a prominent place in North American churches just as it does overseas. The author is particularly motivated to see that divine healing ministry should flourish at Canal Fulton Christian Fellowship (CFCF) and in the other churches of the Christian & Missionary Alliance (C&MA). This would be appropriate since the C&MA was founded by Dr. A.B. Simpson, one of the most notable ministers of divine healing in any age. Divine healing remains a core doctrine of the C&MA and it is fitting that it should be

⁵ Benjamin Warfield, *Counterfeit Miracles* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1995), 6.

restored as a core practice. For these reasons, the author created this project to test a healing ministry training course at CFCF.

This project will be described in six chapters. Chapter One will relate the ministry focus consisting of the author's spiritual journey, the context of ministry, and how they intersect. Chapter Two will build a theoretical foundation by examining biblical, historical, and theological aspects of divine healing. Chapter Three investigates the state of the art in the theory and practice of divine healing. Chapter Four describes the methodology used in the research project. Chapter Five records the experience of participants and researcher during the project, a seven-week training course in divine healing ministry, and the results. Finally, Chapter Six provides reflection upon the results and final thoughts.

CHAPTER ONE

MINISTRY FOCUS

This research project is more than an academic exercise to the researcher. The writer has come to believe that a follower of Jesus is just as dependent upon the Savior for physical and emotional health as for spiritual life. The writer is a passionate advocate for divine healing ministry. That will become apparent throughout the discussion. Therefore, it seemed necessary to prepare the reader in advance. The writer serves as senior pastor of a local church, but this has only been made possible by encountering Jesus as Healer as well as Savior. Before discussing divine healing ministry on a global scale, the writer will address in this chapter how interest in divine healing developed personally. The writer's own brokenness and restoration has a great deal to do with the genesis of this project.

Spiritual Journey

The researcher first encountered the body of Christ at the age of ten when the family began attending a mainline church. Sunday morning attendance was a weekly experience and the researcher was part of the children's choir. At the age of twelve the researcher entered a communicant's class and became a member of the church. Discussion of personal experience with Jesus was not something discussed either from the pulpit or among the members. If there was any explanation of a need for salvation, it

is gone from memory. The researcher had a vague notion that Jesus expected good behavior, and therefore made some effort to stay out of trouble. The writer hoped that good deeds outweighed bad, and supposed that this was the way to heaven. The researcher considered himself a Christian all through childhood.

After leaving home to attend college, the researcher quit attending church. Church attendance had never meant much, so it was not missed. But God was at work. An uncle had been led to faith in Jesus by a co-worker on the assembly line. The co-worker also happened to be the pastor of a tiny Pentecostal church. After coming home from the sophomore year of college, the uncle invited the writer to attend this church. The writer was very surprised. The uncle had never seemed to be a religious person and the invitation was intriguing. Even during the first visit to the Pentecostal church, the researcher was aware that the people present were connected to God in a way that was unfamiliar. For a few Sundays the writer thought that the others were simply more religious, but soon became convicted that he was not a Christian at all, but lost, separated from Christ, and in need of being born again. At this time the writer made a dedication to Christ.

The manifestation of spiritual gifts such as tongues, prophecy, and healing unveiled a new world for the writer. Such manifestations had never been discussed in the mainline church, so the researcher had no bias against them. To the contrary, the writer was fascinated to discover that God was very much present and able to communicate.

When the researcher returned to college, there was an eagerness to join with others in following Jesus. Participation in the meetings of the campus Christian fellowship became a regular occurrence. The writer was very interested in the workings

of the Holy Spirit and read *The Holy Spirit and You* by Dennis Bennett. Bennett explained how one could experience a filling of the Holy Spirit and begin to exercise spiritual gifts. The researcher went to the campus chapel with book in hand and knew there would be privacy since the chapel was almost always empty. Alone in that chapel the writer experienced a wonderful presence of God and prayed in a supernatural language for many hours.

The researcher began attending a Pentecostal church near college. The worship was exuberant and spiritual gifts were regularly exercised. One Sunday the pastor announced that the Lord was healing someone of torn cartilage and ligaments in the knee. The writer listened closely because a knee injury had taken place during high school and pain and swelling had occurred after exercise ever since. The researcher felt no pain as the pastor spoke and the pastor did not offer to pray for the person with a knee problem. After the service ended, the writer realized that the only way to discover any change would be to go running. Normally, running would result in pain and swelling, but on this day neither symptom occurred. The researcher has not had any problem with that knee for over thirty years, and this experience resulted in a profound experience of the love of God and of the reality of divine healing. The writer has believed in divine healing ever since, and has been eager to pray for others who are sick or injured. Many healings have taken place over the years.

It was during these years that the researcher began to have interaction with evangelicals who were much interested in proclaiming a gospel of salvation and transformation through Jesus Christ, but were adamant that miraculous spiritual gifts either did not exist or were not meant to be used. This was confusing for a new believer

since these Christians were committed to the authority of the Bible but resistant to Holy Spirit gifts such as healing, miracles, and tongues. Some parachurch ministries would not allow any discussion of such gifts or of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

The researcher could relate to the experience of John Wimber, founder of the Vineyard movement, who accepted Christ at a home Bible study. The person who led Wimber to Christ directed John and Carol to attend church. After visiting a local church a few times, Wimber began to notice a difference between the Bible, which was filled with accounts of the miraculous, and the church, where the miraculous was completely absent. Eventually Wimber famously asked one of the lay leaders, “When do we get to do the stuff?” Wimber explained that he was interested in raising people from the dead, healing the blind and the paralyzed. The man replied that Christians don’t do that anymore. Wimber learned that the culture of evangelical Christianity taught followers to read the Bible, but not to expect miracles to occur.¹

After college graduation and marriage, the researcher and bride attended a charismatic Bible college. One experience in Bible college stands out in the memory of the researcher. The faculty wanted to provide opportunities for students to exercise gifts of the Holy Spirit, so each professor would meet with a group of about twenty students. After a time of worship, the instructor asked the students to be quiet and listen for direction from God. It was expected that God might give students prophetic words or tongues and interpretation. On one occasion the researcher had a distinct impression that a female student had a growth of some kind and that the student was afraid that it was cancerous. The researcher shared this impression with the group. No students responded.

¹ Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Voice of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 22.

The professor said that it would be a kindness to the student who spoke (the researcher in this case) if the young lady would identify herself. Otherwise, the professor said, the student who spoke might never have the courage to share such an impression again, believing it to be mistaken. In a moment a female student burst into tears and admitted that the word was accurate. The group gathered around the student and prayed. The researcher did not know the young lady and never had opportunity to learn the outcome of the prayer, but faith grew that it was indeed possible to hear from God.

A few years later, the researcher applied for admission to a highly regarded seminary nearby. The researcher was attracted to the seminary because of its reputation for scholarship. The application process required an interview. During the interview, a seminary representative informed the researcher that the school had never accepted a student who admitted to speaking in tongues and recommended not to pursue admission. This was a rude awakening for the researcher and an introduction into the evangelical world of dispensationalism, the concept that history is divided into various eras and that miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit are not available to believers in the post-apostolic era. The researcher did abort the application process at the dispensational seminary, but later attended another evangelical seminary which did not encourage the exercise of miraculous spiritual gifts, but did not prohibit them. The topic of miraculous gifts of God was more or less ignored.

During seminary the researcher was a youth pastor in a mainline church. Overall, it was a good experience, but again it was sometimes problematic to be a charismatic in such an environment. The researcher recalls a time when the baptism of the Holy Spirit was discussed during a retreat led by the researcher. This caused some consternation in

the church leadership and the researcher was called before a board to account for the retreat. The senior pastor was present and during the discussion the senior pastor admitted to the board an experience of speaking in tongues. This was a revelation to the church. The senior pastor had been there for some time without ever saying anything about miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit. It was an indication to the researcher that further ministry in that denomination would likely result in years of potential conflict over the manifestation of gifts of the Holy Spirit. The researcher ended association with that denomination upon graduation from seminary and went to Japan in order to teach English in a language school.

The language school in Kobe, Japan had been founded by American missionaries more than one hundred years earlier. There was still some Christian element and the curriculum included Bible courses and chapel services. The researcher and fellow teachers were glad for the opportunity to be open about the good news of Jesus Christ. Friends from Bible college days had been at the language school for several years and numerous students had begun following Jesus. Eventually, this group of students became the nucleus of Kobe Bible Fellowship where the researcher served as assistant pastor. The senior pastor, Rob Flaherty, was a friend from Bible college days and was an advocate of the miraculous spiritual gifts.

After five years in Japan doing teaching and church planting, the writer and family returned to the U.S. and became part of Canal Fulton Christian Fellowship, a local church of the Christian & Missionary Alliance. Eventually, the writer became an elder at CFCF (Canal Fulton Christian Fellowship) and after the senior pastor experienced a nervous breakdown, was asked to be considered a candidate for senior pastor by the

board of elders. The church called the researcher to become senior pastor and work began in 2006. After a brief honeymoon period, significant conflict began to take place. The tension took its toll, and within the span of two years or so, the writer became quite disheartened. It felt like a sabbatical was needed to recover from the stress, but this was not possible. Though the writer had been in the position for such a brief period, it felt like it was not possible to continue, and the possibility of suffering a nervous breakdown seemed real.

An old friend invited the writer to attend a conference in Toronto at Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship. The friend said that the Holy Spirit was moving in wonderful ways and that the TACF people would be happy to minister to this hurting pastor. The writer visited during a summer revival service which was attended by about 200 people. During the first meeting there was an invitation for people to come forward for prayer by the ministry team. The writer went forward and was met by a woman who put a hand on his shoulder and invited the Holy Spirit to come. Within seconds the researcher was aware of the manifest presence of God. The writer experienced a sensation of heaviness and bent over. Something like electricity went through the writer's body in waves, causing noticeable trembling. The woman prayed for five or ten minutes and left to pray for others. A man on the ministry team approached and also invited the Holy Spirit to come. The same sensations occurred again.

The writer's friend arrived with the TACF senior pastor, Steve Long, and his wife Sandra. Pastor Long introduced himself and shook hands. He continued to hold the writer's hand, which seemed odd in North American culture. In the middle of the conversation this researcher felt a wave of power and was bent double once more. The

Longs prayed for the writer for an extended time. When they finished, several others prayed as well. The writer was amazed at the peace and comfort felt as a result of this ministry. The writer had been considering to resign from the pastorate before coming to Toronto. The researcher suspects that a nervous breakdown had not been far away. Nevertheless, an hour of supernatural ministry in the form of divine healing prayer had brought such restoration that continued ministry was possible. The writer was astonished and grateful.

This encounter with God resulted in an examination of the writer's theology and Christian experience. Even though the writer had attended a charismatic Bible college and had seen people healed, there had never been an encounter with the presence of God in such a powerful way. The researcher recognized that the believers at Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship had an anointing of the Holy Spirit that surpassed anything previously known. The writer was filled with hope. The writer returned to pastoral ministry resolved to learn more about the ways of the Holy Spirit. Since that time the writer has returned to Toronto on numerous occasions to attend conferences and has found each one to be refreshing and rejuvenating.

The speaker at one of the Toronto conferences, Randy Clark, offered to lay hands on anyone who desired to participate. Clark described these sessions not as healing ministry, although there were other occasions for healing prayer, but as times of impartation. The researcher came to understand that Clark believed that the act of placing hands on others made it possible for the manifest presence of the Holy Spirit to be transferred to those for whom he prayed. When Randy prayed for this writer, there was a distinct awareness of the presence of God. It was so strong as to be tangible. The Holy

Spirit's effect on the writer's body produced strong trembling. Subsequent to those experiences the researcher has been conscious of an inner spiritual strengthening which seemed to result in greater faith and more frequent or powerful effects upon those prayed for.

In the years since, the writer has become aware that there have been many critics of the events in Toronto. Some have gone so far as to characterize Clark, John Arnott (founder of TACF) and others as deceivers and the manifestations in the meetings as demonic. The researcher has been greatly saddened by such judgments. Occasionally the writer has responded to such judgments with personal testimony about how experiences in Toronto and elsewhere with Dr. Clark have been life changing. The writer has explained that it would have been agreeable to go anywhere else to receive healing and deliverance, but that there seemed to be very few places where such ministry was available. The writer is not aware of any critics who are able to minister the healing and deliverance which are needed by so many.

Ministry Context

The researcher is senior pastor of Canal Fulton Christian Fellowship in Canal Fulton, Ohio. CFCF is part of the Christian & Missionary Alliance, the denomination founded by Dr. A.B. Simpson, a pioneer in divine healing ministry in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. Of course, the writer's specific ministry context is significant, but the denominational connection and Simpson are important to this project as well. The writer will proceed first with a discussion of Simpson.

The driving force behind the establishment of the Alliance and of Nyack College was A.B. Simpson. Simpson was central in the doctrinal formulation and practice of the early Alliance churches. The main doctrines of the Alliance came out of Simpson's life experience and that life has parallels to the writer's life and ministry context. Though Dr. Simpson was robust in later ministry, the early ministry left the Alliance founder a very sick man. Simpson became pastor of a large urban church at age twenty-one and soon was troubled by heart problems which required months of rest away from the ministry. Even climbing the slightest elevation was difficult.² Simpson's condition was so poor that a physician informed the young pastor that death could be expected in a matter of months.³ Not long afterward Dr. Simpson was asked to pray for a man in his congregation on the verge of death. Dr. Simpson did so, and was astonished to find that the man was instantly healed. The man lived for years and reported to Simpson that the healing was a miracle.⁴

The Alliance founder began to study the Bible to determine whether or not healing was indeed part of the gospel. Simpson concluded that it was, and felt it was necessary to personally appropriate the truths of the scriptures. On a Friday afternoon Simpson went into the pine woods of Old Orchard Beach, Maine and pledged to God that he would never question divine healing again, that he would trust Jesus for all physical needs, and that he would minister divine healing whenever called upon to do so.⁵ The

² A.B. Simpson, *The Gospel of Healing* (Camp Hill, Pennsylvania: Wing Spread Publishers, 1986), 119.

³ Ibid., 121.

⁴ Ibid., 124.

⁵ Ibid., 125.

result of that pledge was dramatic. Simpson may have had the most influential healing ministry in that generation.

This brief review of the healing ministry of A.B. Simpson is included because it is a significant part of the theological and practical ministry foundation of the Christian & Missionary Alliance and of Canal Fulton Christian Fellowship, the local church of this writer. The basic doctrine of the Alliance has not changed from Simpson's time until today. The Alliance has always claimed faith in a four-fold gospel: Jesus our Savior, Jesus our Sanctifier, Jesus our Healer, and Jesus our Coming King. Nevertheless, it has become rare in U.S. Alliance churches to hear a testimony about Jesus our Healer. Occasionally, a report of healing will occur, but it is relatively uncommon. Canal Fulton Christian Fellowship is typical of U.S. Alliance churches in the sense that divine healing has not been much emphasized or practiced in the past.

CFCF was founded about twenty-five years ago. From the beginning the church has had only a handful of members from an Alliance background. Thus they generally are not familiar with the four-fold gospel, particularly the doctrine of Jesus our Healer. The prior church experience of most CFCF people leans toward churches where cessationism was the norm in practice if not in formal doctrine. CFCF members do seem to relate well to the Alliance doctrines of Jesus our Savior (salvation by grace through faith), Jesus our Sanctifier (holy living), and Jesus our Coming King (physical return of Christ to earth). These three doctrines are fairly mainstream in the American evangelical world.

Few CFCF people seem opposed to the exercise of the charismata because of theological objections. It does appear that they have had little exposure to the charismata in their previous church experience. There seems to be some fear of the unknown (which

is understandable in things unfamiliar). On one occasion a CFCF member was heard quietly speaking in tongues during a Sunday service and was overheard by his wife who was seated next to him. The man was also visibly shaking under the power of the Holy Spirit. The wife was upset by these manifestations and later explained that she had never before witnessed either phenomenon in all her previous church experience. Other church members came to the husband during the trembling and expressed concern that the man was having a stroke. The youth pastor recognized that the man was under the influence of the Holy Spirit and took him to an office so that no one would attempt medical intervention. It should also be noted that this individual has suffered pain from chronic back problems and has experienced relief through healing prayer by staff and others.

Since the researcher became senior pastor there have been numerous instances of divine healing as a result of prayer by the pastors and elders. Some of the instances have been shared with the congregation by means of testimonies in Sunday services. CFCF members have not registered any complaints about these testimonies or expressed doubts about their validity. At the same time, it has been rare that someone other than a pastor or elder has testified that they laid hands on a sick or infirm person. Likewise, there have not been many testimonies of someone receiving healing through the ministry of anyone other than a pastor or elder. Thus there appears to be a kind of clergy/laity divide. The result is that the exercise of the charismata in general and of the ministry of healing in particular are not experienced by most CFCF people. This situation does not correspond to the model of ministry demonstrated by Jesus with the apostles and the seventy disciples in the gospels, and it does not match the experience of the early believers recorded in the Acts of the Apostles where numerous believers performed healing

ministry. It is the researcher's position that the biblical model of divine healing ministry is normative and should be replicated at CFCF and at all other churches.

The researcher has experienced a deep desire to see all the members of CFCF have opportunity to become familiar with the practice of divine healing ministry. The exercise of the charismata was never intended to be the province of church leadership alone. It is clear from scripture that God has distributed spiritual gifts throughout the body of Christ and not to a select few. This point of view is not merely the private opinion of the researcher. The Bible, church history, and sound theological reflection all support the contention that divine healing ministry is the heritage of all those who follow Jesus Christ. In the next chapter, these three foundations will be examined in detail in order to provide justification for the research project.

CHAPTER TWO

THE STATE OF THE ART IN THIS MINISTRY PROJECT

As with any area of ministry, divine healing has many influential figures, beliefs and practices which characterize and shape it. The researcher will not attempt to present an exhaustive description of these facets of divine healing culture, but will discuss some of those which have had personal influence. For this researcher, divine healing ministry is not strictly an area of academic interest or disinterested observation. As explained earlier, the researcher had been a senior pastor for a brief time when conflict in the local church produced serious mental and physical distress. The researcher's predecessor had suffered a nervous breakdown in the same church. Under these conditions, the researcher also considered to quit ministry entirely, but received divine healing prayer and was strengthened to such a remarkable degree that it was possible to continue ministry without even a sabbatical. Since that time the researcher has become acquainted with some of the divine healing practitioners, concepts and ministry models which are influential today.

The researcher experienced healing at Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship in Toronto, Canada (now known as Catch the Fire) a ministry which witnessed an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in 1994. Though the researcher went to Toronto more than ten years after that time, the power of the Holy Spirit was still manifest there. According

to the *New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, Randy Clark was the “instigator of the Toronto Blessing.” This dictionary goes on to describe Clark’s ministry after Toronto in this fashion: “He has ignited the fires of revival in many other North American cities and several countries, including Guatemala, Russia, Norway, England, Ireland, Chile, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, and Colombia.”¹

The divine healing and teaching ministry of Clark has indeed had effect all over the globe. In recent decades, perhaps no one has had more influence than Clark in this area of ministry. It is worthwhile to see how Clark views his own ministry and that of the organization Global Awakening of which he is the founder. The Global Awakening website describes Clark’s ministry as follows:

Based in Mechanicsburg, PA, The Apostolic Network of Global Awakening is a teaching, healing and impartation ministry with a heart for the nations. Founded in 1994 by Randy Clark after his involvement with the Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship revival, the ministry exists to fulfill the biblical commission of Jesus: As you go preach, saying the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give (Matthew 10:7-8). Through the formation of ANGA (the Apostolic Network of Global Awakening), IMT (International Ministry Trips), the Schools of Healing and Impartation, and the Global School of Supernatural Ministry, Global Awakening offers training, conferences, humanitarian aid and ministry trips in an effort to raise up a company of men and women who will facilitate revival among the nation’s leaders.²

The influence of Randy Clark in the ministry of divine healing is manifested directly and indirectly. The direct influence consists of thousands of healings resulting from Clark personally ministering to the sick. It is not unusual for many people to be healed in one meeting when Clark ministers. Bill Johnson, pastor of Bethel Church in

¹ R.M. Riss, “Randy Clark,” in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, ed. Stanley Burgess (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 552.

² Global Awakening, (accessed July 29, 2014) <http://www.globalawakening.com>.

Redding, California invited Clark to visit Bethel Church for five days of meetings. Four hundred people were healed during that period.³

The direct healing ministry of Clark is shown not only in numbers of healings but also in unusual ones. Several years ago Clark began to witness in his meetings that God was touching people who had symptoms of pain and restricted movement from surgically implanted metal. Clark conducted a study in 2012 during healing meetings in Brazil, Denmark, England, Scotland, Hong Kong, Korea, Australia and numerous locations across the United States. The study reported that 149 people were healed and this represented 38% of those who received prayer.⁴

Clark's direct influence of healing the sick in the name of Jesus has been great, but it has been many times multiplied by the indirect influence of training others in divine healing ministry. Global Awakening offers Schools of Healing and Impartation around the world. A typical healing school takes place over four days and offers the participants lectures and opportunity to pray for the sick. Global Awakening also offers International Ministry Trips to many nations during which participants pray for the sick in church meetings and crusades. For those who desire an extended time of training in healing ministry, there is the Global School of Supernatural Ministry, a one to three year resident program in Harrisburg, PA. An online version of GSSM exists also. Since 2011 Global Awakening has been a partner with United Theological Seminary in offering a divine healing focus in the Doctor of Ministry program. Global Awakening has published

³ Bill Johnson, foreword to *There is More! Reclaiming the Power of Impartation*, by Randy Clark (Mechanicsburg, PA: Global Awakening, 2006), xi.

⁴ Randy Clark, "A Study of the Effects of Christian Prayer on Pain or Mobility Restrictions from Surgeries Involving Implanted Materials" (D.Min. thesis, United Theological Seminary, 2013), 211.

numerous books and training materials which assist believers in divine healing ministry. Clark's *Ministry Team Training Manual* is used by churches all over the world and has been translated into eight languages.⁵

The spiritual gift of the word of knowledge in connection with healing is an area in which Clark's ministry is a model among contemporary healing ministries. Dr. Clark defines a word of knowledge as "a supernatural revelation of information by the Holy Spirit."⁶ Clark regularly receives impressions from the Lord before and during healing meetings. These impressions are understood to be signals of the physical conditions and people whom God plans to heal. Healing aided by words of knowledge is an aspect of ministry in which Clark has tremendous depth of experience and insight. Words of knowledge have been manifested in every Clark healing meeting which the researcher has observed.

As previously stated, Clark has multiplied the effectiveness of Global Awakening many times not only by personally ministering healing, but also by teaching others to do the same. The case of words of knowledge is a good example. Clark's *Ministry Team Training Manual* teaches that words of knowledge may be received by physical sensations, mental pictures, seeing words, mental impressions, dreams, and visions. Clark urges believers not to dismiss such brief revelations, but to humbly offer the impression to an individual or group.⁷

⁵ Candy Gunther Brown, *Testing Prayer: Science and Healing* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 47.

⁶ Randy Clark, *Ministry Team Training Manual* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Global Awakening, 2004), 61.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 62-64.

Clark serves as a good example of ministering with a humble attitude. Clark readily admits mistakes and fears and ministers with an attitude of warmth and approachability. The researcher has witnessed that during Schools of Healing and International Ministry Trips conducted by Global Awakening, it is common for students to receive accurate words of knowledge for the first time and these words often lead to the healing of a person in need. The researcher believes it is the unpretentious manner of Clark which enables others to overcome their fear of the unknown and to receive and minister a word of knowledge.

It is significant to note that Clark's appreciation for the ministry of words of knowledge in connection to healing was sparked by the ministry of John Wimber, founder of the Vineyard movement. Although Wimber is no longer part of the contemporary world of divine healing ministry (he died in 1997), many current healing ministers trace the origin of their ministry to Wimber. It was at a John Wimber meeting in 1984 that Clark first saw the power of God cause people to tremble. Wimber also gave Clark a prophecy that was of great encouragement.⁸ When Clark first became interested in starting divine healing ministry in his local church, it was a Wimber intern, Lance Pittluck, who directed Clark to seek words of knowledge.⁹ Dr. Candy Gunther Brown notes that it was Wimber who first taught that believers might receive words of knowledge by "hearing them, seeing them, thinking them, dreaming them, finding

⁸ Bill Johnson and Randy Clark, *The Essential Guide to Healing: Equipping All Christians to Pray for the Sick* (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 2011), 25.

⁹ Ibid., 26.

themselves saying them, or most commonly, feeling them as sympathetic pain in their own bodies.”¹⁰

The researcher’s comments about the connection between Clark and Wimber are not meant to suggest that any minister of divine healing has a patent on any healing practice as if it were an invention. God is the giver of all spiritual gifts. Clark and Wimber are simply vessels through whom the Holy Spirit has worked. Clark and Wimber have been excellent examples of giving God all the glory for their ministries.

Another prominent practice in the ministry of Randy Clark is impartation. Clark believes that laying on of hands (a practice referred to as an elementary teaching in Hebrews 6:1-2) is used to impart the Holy Spirit Himself, to stir up spiritual giftings, and to release callings, wisdom and authority for leadership.¹¹ Clark considers impartation a “lost doctrine” which needs to be restored to the church, and points to two scriptures which indicate the Apostle Paul ministered impartation to Timothy.¹² The first scripture is 1 Timothy 4:14: “Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders.” The second foundational text is 2 Timothy 1:6: “For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands.”

Clark regards the ministry of impartation as equipping other believers for ministry. Clark says that impartation is not simply a matter of receiving a blessing or strength from God. The power received is for the purpose of ministering to others. Clark

¹⁰ Brown, *Testing Prayer*, 33.

¹¹ Randy Clark, *Kingdom Foundations: A School of Healing and Impartation Workbook* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Global Awakening, 2011), 41.

¹² Randy Clark, *There is More! Reclaiming the Power of Impartation* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Global Awakening, 2006), 7.

argues that this power enables believers to fulfill their God-given destiny. Though they may never have global ministries, they should become more effective at the local church level and in their community.¹³

In *There is More! Reclaiming the Power of Impartation*, Clark describes the experiences of numerous people whose lives were dramatically altered by impartation through the laying on of hands. Perhaps the most powerful impartation in the book is the story of Heidi and Rolland Baker. The Bakers were already veteran missionaries when they came to Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship. Rolland came in 1995 and experienced joy and renewal. Heidi came to Toronto in 1996 while experiencing blood poisoning, chronic fatigue, and pneumonia, and she was totally healed.¹⁴ In 1997 Heidi returned to Toronto. While praying at the altar she heard an internal voice declare she would see hundreds of churches and thousands of new believers in Mozambique. Heidi was astonished since she and Rolland had previously started only four churches in seventeen years.¹⁵ Since then God has created 6,000 churches, many orphanages, and multiple Bible schools in eighteen countries through the Bakers and their organization, Iris Ministries.¹⁶

The Bakers have described some of the miracles which God has performed through the believers in Mozambique. In *Always Enough: God's Miraculous Provision Among the Poorest Children on Earth*, the Bakers tell the experiences of Pastor Rego and

¹³ Clark, *There is More!*, 4.

¹⁴ Ibid., 100.

¹⁵ Ibid., 101.

¹⁶ Fred and Sharon Wright, *The World's Greatest Revivals* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, 2007), 238.

Pastor Joni, both of whom have witnessed people raised from the dead.¹⁷ Heidi Baker reports seeing “totally blind eyes, white from cataracts, change color and become normal and healthy.”¹⁸ The researcher became acquainted with Dr. Rolland Baker in the Doctor of Ministry program at United Theological Seminary. Baker ministered in impartation to numerous students during prayer meetings. The researcher was greatly strengthened during these sessions and extremely conscious of the Holy Spirit’s presence.

Another influential ministry in divine healing is Bethel Church in Redding, California led by Pastor Bill Johnson. In the estimation of the researcher, Bethel is probably the most prominent local church in North America in the area of divine healing ministry. The Bethel website regularly posts testimonies of healing and Bill Johnson and associate staff members teach about healing and pray for healing all over the globe. Johnson has become prominent partly through conference speaking and attracting many people seeking healing at Bethel Church. Dr. Candy Gunther Brown reports that Johnson spends about one hundred eighty days per year speaking at Global Awakening conferences and evangelistic healing rallies. Others come to Bethel Church to be prayed for in the Healing Rooms. Pastor Johnson has also established a three-year School of Supernatural Ministry for those who wish to minister more effectively in divine healing.¹⁹ Finally, Johnson is perhaps the most prolific current author of books about healing and associated topics. The researcher would particularly recommend *When Heaven Invades Earth: A Practical Guide to a Life of Miracles, Face to Face with God, and Hosting the*

¹⁷ Rolland and Heidi Baker, *Always Enough, God’s Miraculous Provision Among the Poorest Children on Earth* (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 2002), 75.

¹⁸ Ibid., 76.

¹⁹ Brown, *Testing Prayer*, 41.

Presence. Johnson and Randy Clark have coauthored *The Essential Guide to Healing and Healing Unplugged*.

One reason that Bill Johnson has become influential as an author and speaker is that this pastor is no armchair quarterback. Johnson does not merely talk about the ministry of healing and miracles; he is a practitioner. This factor lends great credibility to the theology communicated in the books and conferences. The book *When Heaven Invades Earth: A Practical Guide to a Life of Miracles* is case in point. Chapter one describes what Johnson describes as a normal Christian life. Johnson describes a wedding performed at Bethel Church. The bride and groom had invited a large number of homeless and poor people to attend and the other guests had been asked to bring wedding presents of warm clothing for those in need. Before the wedding even began, the bride and groom mentioned to Johnson that one of the guests had been in a horrible accident and had an artificial shin and hip and walked with a severe limp. The man also suffered from cancer in the neck and required a brace to hold his head erect. Doctors had predicted the man had two or three years to live. After Johnson and the others prayed for the man, he walked without pain or a limp and the lump was gone from the neck. Later the man's doctor gave him a clean bill of health.²⁰ From Johnson's description of the event, it is clear that it was not regarded as an unusual event at Bethel Church. According to Johnson, miracles had become common enough at Bethel that, for church members

²⁰ Bill Johnson, *When Heaven Invades Earth: A Practical Guide to a Life of Miracles* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image Publishers, 2003), 26.

present at the wedding, “a life-threatening disease seemed more like a potential miracle than it did something to fear.”²¹

It is significant that in another of Bill Johnson’s books, *The Essential Guide to Healing: Equipping All Christians to Pray for the Sick*, the pastor expresses indebtedness to John Wimber just as Clark has expressed elsewhere. Johnson says that his greatest breakthrough in ministry came in 1987 after attending two conferences put on by John Wimber.²² Johnson says that, although Wimber did not lay hands on anyone for impartation, miracles began to happen at Bethel Church soon afterward.²³ It is clear that both Randy Clark and Bill Johnson received a spiritual legacy from John Wimber. It appears that the influence of Wimber lives on in the language and practice of those who minister divine healing today. For this reason, the researcher recommends the books of John Wimber to anyone wishing to understand the contemporary culture of divine healing ministry. Though written in 1987, *Power Healing* is still one of the most helpful volumes around for providing an introduction to divine healing and divine healing ministry. For example, Wimber explains why he prefers to describe Christian healing as “divine healing” rather than “miracle healing” or “faith healing” or “supernatural healing.”²⁴ This researcher has followed Wimber in using the term divine healing in this thesis.

In *Power Healing* Wimber offers some basic biblical purposes of divine healing:

1. Demonstrating Christ’s compassion and mercy (Matt 14:14; 20:34; Mark 1:41)

²¹ Johnson, *When Heaven Invades Earth*, 26.

²² Johnson and Clark, *The Essential Guide to Healing*, 41.

²³ Ibid., 42.

²⁴ John Wimber, *Power Healing* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1987), 6.

2. Bearing witness to the truth of Christ's claims about himself (Matt 8:14-17; Luke 5:18-26)
3. Demonstrating that God's kingdom has arrived (Matt. 4:23)
4. Showing Jesus is the One who was promised by the Father (Matt. 11:1-6)
5. Illustrating on the physical plane what God wants to do for us spiritually (Matt. 9:1-8)
6. Bringing people to repentance (Luke 10:1-8)
7. Showing that the gospel is intended for the Gentiles as well as the Jews (Luke 7:1-10)²⁵

This list is an excellent summary and the researcher has not found a better explanation elsewhere in much longer discussions of the topic.

Wimber also briefly discusses the concept that it is God who sends illness so that we may benefit from suffering. Wimber concedes that some types of suffering are aspects of the Christian life, but points out that it is not biblical to regard sickness as one of God's agents. The author of *Power Healing* explains that the gospels portray Jesus as someone who saw sickness as an enemy of human beings and not as a friend. The root of sickness is the demonic realm.²⁶ The false idea that sickness is a gift from God is a major stumbling block for anyone who wants to receive divine healing and it can certainly be an impediment for someone who wants to minister divine healing. After all, if God is sending the sickness, who would want to prevent the sick person from receiving a blessing from God?

²⁵ Wimber, 12.

²⁶ Ibid., 15.

This strange concept of sickness as blessing is discussed also in another excellent overview of divine healing ministry written by Francis MacNutt, *Healing*. John Wimber considered *Healing* a classic among books on the topic. In chapter two MacNutt offers a very insightful explanation of Western prejudices against divine healing. One of the prejudices is that God desires for people to experience physical illness and injury. In this view, a sick Christian is blessed because the sufferer is experiencing pain like Christ did on the cross. MacNutt points out that the heroic view of the sick is unbiblical and that “traditional Christian teaching is that most sickness is simply an effect of original sin.”²⁷

Another Western prejudice which MacNutt takes up is the opinion that divine healing is the work of especially holy people, not average Christians. MacNutt notes that this view is common among Catholics. (The researcher notes that this view does seem to have a variant in the Protestant realm, in which Protestants hold that laypeople should not engage in healing ministry since James 5 refers to elders doing such ministry.) MacNutt correctly refutes these views by pointing out that Mark 16 says that miraculous signs will be associated with believers in general. The text does not limit healing to a certain class of Christians. MacNutt sees refusal to minister healing as false humility: “In the name of this virtue we unwittingly have emptied our lives of the very life and power that Christ came to bring.”²⁸

The state of the art in establishing the theological foundation for divine healing ministry is represented by Dr. John Mark Ruthven. Ruthven has effectively countered a view which stands in the way of effective divine healing ministry, cessationism, the

²⁷ MacNutt, *Healing* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1974), 33.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 35.

concept that God caused certain spiritual gifts such as healing, tongues, and prophecy to cease after the passing of the Twelve or the formation of the New Testament canon. This misguided outlook is not new, but it is certainly as harmful today as it has been for centuries, especially in North America and Europe. Clearly, someone who holds this position would be reluctant to have someone lay hands on them for healing and would be opposed to laying hands on others for healing. Dr. Ruthven has authored one of the most informative works regarding the biblical case for continuation of spiritual gifts such as healing: *On the Cessation of the Charismata: The Protestant Polemic on Post-Biblical Miracles*. Ruthven's book is a response to *Counterfeit Miracles*, the classic argument for cessationism by Princeton theologian Dr. Benjamin Warfield. It becomes clear in Ruthven's book that Warfield offers little scriptural support for cessationism. Ruthven notes that Warfield devotes only half a dozen pages to biblical examination and almost nothing to exegesis of specific texts.²⁹ This is revealing since Protestants regard the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice. If scriptural evidence existed, Warfield would have offered it. The lack of scripture in Warfield's argument shows that the Bible cannot be used to defend cessationism since scripture itself takes the opposite view. Ruthven shows that cessationists begin with a philosophical premise that God long ago ceased to do miracles through believers. The Bible nowhere declares that spiritual gifts will cease before the return of Christ.

Ruthven is also the author of *What's Wrong with Protestant Theology? Tradition vs. Biblical Emphasis*. Ruthven explains that the Catholic church of John Calvin's time appealed to their miracles to show the legitimacy of their doctrine which was under attack

²⁹ Jon Mark Ruthven, *On the Cessation of the Charismata: The Protestant Polemic on Post-Biblical Miracles* (Tulsa, OK: Word & Spirit Press, 2011), 77.

by the Reformers.³⁰ In that time the pope's encyclicals had essentially the same authority as scripture.³¹ In order to discredit the pope and papal revelations, Calvin's strategy was to insist that no miracles had taken place since the New Testament era.³² Therefore, according to Calvin, there had been no more apostles after the New Testament era (since only apostles do miracles) and thus the pope was not an apostle and had no authority to issue revelation. This strategy was helpful to the Reformers in opposing the Catholic church and its abuses, but it had the additional result of minimizing the biblical concept of the priesthood of all believers.³³ Dr. Ruthven points out that the basic mission taught by the New Testament is "to see the power of the Spirit spread as broadly as possible and offers Acts 2:17, 39 and I Cor. 14:1 as evidence."³⁴ Dr. Ruthven's main point is to get the reader to see that the essence of the New Covenant is the "internal revelation of the Spirit" by which the believer may "walk in intimate communication with God."³⁵

If the reader wishes to see divine healing ministry from an international perspective, the researcher recommends *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing*. This work includes articles discussing divine healing culture and practices in many countries. This is highly beneficial since instances of divine healing seem to be more frequent and more powerful than what is typically observed in North America and

³⁰ Jon Mark Ruthven, *What's Wrong with Protestant Theology? Tradition vs. Biblical Emphasis* (Tulsa, OK: Word & Spirit Press, 2013), 16.

³¹ Ibid., 17.

³² Ibid., 18.

³³ Ibid., 20..

³⁴ Ibid., 21.

³⁵ Ibid., 147.

Europe. The articles in this volume discuss Swedish charismatics, African migrant churches in Germany, Brazilian Pentecostalism, the healing work of Carlos Annacondia in Argentina, mainline churches in Ghana, Korean Protestantism, Catholic charismatic healing in Brazil, India, and Nigeria, healing and church growth in China.³⁶ This is not an exhaustive list.

If the reader is interested in an analysis of divine healing ministry from a neutral, academic perspective, the researcher considers the state of the art to be *Testing Prayer: Science and Healing* by Dr. Candy Brown, Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Indiana University. Brown describes the attempt to be objective: “I do not assume the existence or nonexistence of a deity or other suprahuman forces. What I argue is that people’s religious beliefs often have real-world effects that can be studied empirically.”³⁷ Brown began studying the revival at Toronto Airport Vineyard Church in January 1995 and has continued the study of divine healing by observing Global Awakening (led by Randy Clark) and Iris Ministries (led by Rolland and Heidi Baker). Brown wrote *Testing Prayer* out of the conviction that “researchers can and should use empirical methods to study prayer for healing.”³⁸ Brown advocates a four-prong model for studying healing. The first prong is the collection and analysis of medical records before and after prayer to determine if there is any measurable improvement in their condition “for which there is no obvious medical or natural explanation.” The second prong is survey research to investigate how people perceive their encounter with healing prayer. The third prong is

³⁶ Candy Gunther Brown, *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing*

³⁷ Brown, *Testing Prayer*, 7.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 10.

clinical trials which can examine if healing prayer results in measurable changes in certain conditions. The fourth prong is follow-up interviews to determine if there are lasting effects of healing prayer.³⁹

Brown's discussion of what constitutes proof of divine healing is very insightful. Pentecostals and charismatics sometimes argue that medical records prove that divine healing has taken place. The researcher has heard ministers of divine healing voice frustration with doctors and other medical professionals who decline to declare that a miracle has taken place. Efforts to prove divine healing are problematic from the scientific point of view because, as Brown points out, proving things is not an appropriate goal for science: scientific measurements can disprove theories but not prove them. A better explanation for the data may be developed later. Science only deals with probabilities.⁴⁰ Pentecostals and charismatics can forget that the most a medical professional can declare from the scientific realm is that there is no obvious medical or natural explanation for improved condition of a patient. The researcher has heard Bill Johnson state that it is not effective to declare healing of an individual based on medical records since it could always be attributed to spontaneous remission. In the culture of divine healing ministry, the testimony of the person is usually considered sufficient evidence of divine healing. Church services are not designed to be medical laboratories with sophisticated equipment. And, according to Brown, Pentecostals/charismatics define

³⁹ Brown, *Testing Prayer*, 10.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 11.

healing very loosely. Within divine healing culture, healing simply means that the individual prayed for testifies to some improvement.⁴¹

Brown witnessed examples of this loose definition of healing while observing Mozambican and western members of Iris Ministries. After praying for people who reported deafness or blindness, the Iris members conducted informal tests such as speaking from behind the head of the deaf person or asking the blind person to count fingers from one foot away.⁴² Brown resolved to conduct more sophisticated assessments of change in condition. Brown visited Global Awakening and Iris Ministries events at multiple sites in Mozambique, Brazil and the U.S. Brown and assistants measured auditory and visual acuity before and after divine healing prayer while using a handheld audiometer and vision charts.⁴³ In Mozambique and Brazil, Brown found significant improvement in hearing and vision in the tested population. In a Seattle conference, only two of seventeen pre- and post-tested subjects exhibited measurable improvements.⁴⁴ Brown states that conversations with Randy Clark and Heidi Baker have revealed that these two ministers of divine healing both witness more “dramatic improvements” in poorer nations than in more developed countries.⁴⁵

What is the current state of divine healing ministry in the global church? For starters, let us consider the global church itself. Though it may not be aware of the trend, the North American church is becoming less and less representative of the global church.

⁴¹ Brown, *Testing Prayer*, 202.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 199.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 203.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 207-214.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 212.

The reader who really wants to know the state of Pentecostal/charismatic Christianity and of divine healing practices should consult *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* by Philip Jenkins. Jenkins highlights the tremendous shift that has been occurring and will continue to take place in the span of 150 years. Jenkins points out that Christianity is no longer a Euro-American religion: “In 1900, 83 percent of the world’s Christians lived in Europe and North America. In 2050 72 percent of Christians will live in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.”⁴⁶ These statistics reveal that the church is stagnant in Europe and North America and it is exploding elsewhere. Jenkins predicts that the phrase “a white Christian” will soon sound like an oxymoron, as unusual as “a Swedish Buddhist.”⁴⁷

North American and European Christians are not only decreasing in numerical significance relative to the global body of Christ. Aspects of Northern theology have become almost provincial, no longer representative of typical beliefs in the international arena. For example, cessationist theology and antsupernaturalist theology may have become dominant in North America and Europe, but they are not strong in the remainder of the world. Jenkins explains that believers of a charismatic orientation are increasingly the norm rather than the exception when one regards the church from a worldwide perspective. Jenkins predicts that the number of Pentecostal/charismatic believers will cross the one billion mark before 2050. And in view of the fact that Pentecostalism did not begin to proliferate until about 1900 and has several hundred million adherents today,

⁴⁶ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), xi.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

Jenkins suggests that the Pentecostal/charismatic movement is the most successful social movement of the past century.⁴⁸

In *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts* Craig Keener gives further evidence of the global shift toward Pentecostal/charismatic Christianity and toward divine healing ministry. Keener has interacted with Christian leaders across the globe and finds that healing miracles are widely believed in throughout Latin America, Asia and Africa. For example, Keener refers to Cuban Lutheran bishop Ismael Figueras who says that it is a rare Latin American Christian who rejects the miraculous.⁴⁹ Keener cites Methodist bishop Hwa Yung who states that Asians affirm miracles.⁵⁰ Keener also mentions Danny McCain, a professor in Nigeria who says that Western antisupernaturalism is almost uniformly rejected by African Christians.⁵¹

Who represents the dinosaur position regarding divine healing ministry? A significant part of the North American evangelical world regards divine healing as something that took place in the ministries of Jesus and of the apostles in the early church, but rejects any manifestation of healing or miraculous gifts as illegitimate today. If the reader wants to become acquainted with a contemporary champion of cessationism, John MacArthur is one example. MacArthur's *Strange Fire: The Danger of Offending the Holy Spirit with Counterfeit Worship* seems to the researcher to be typical of the cessationist worldview. MacArthur is not reserved in attacking Pentecostals and

⁴⁸ Jenkins, 10.

⁴⁹ Craig Keener, *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament Accounts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), 214.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 215.

⁵¹ Ibid., 217.

charismatics. According to MacArthur, Pentecostal/charismatic teaching and practice is “heresy.”⁵² MacArthur holds that “no other movement has done more to damage the cause of the gospel, to distort the truth, and to smother the articulation of sound doctrine.”⁵³ Speaking in tongues is “gibberish.”⁵⁴ One thing that the reader will not find in MacArthur’s book is an analysis of the Bible which demonstrates that spiritual gifts such as tongues, healing and miracles ceased to exist sometime in the past. This is very curious since MacArthur identifies the main sin of Pentecostals/charismatics as this: “Pentecostals and charismatics elevate religious experience over biblical truth.”⁵⁵ There is a reason for the absence of a biblical argument against such gifts in MacArthur’s work. It is that the Bible nowhere makes such an argument.

MacArthur’s lack of biblical argument is consistent with earlier generations of cessationists. The reader who wants to investigate an example of cessationism from the twentieth century should consider *Counterfeit Miracles* by B.B. Warfield, first published in 1918. As with MacArthur, the lack of any biblical argument for the disappearance of spiritual gifts is significant. The reason that Warfield does not offer such an argument is that there is not one available in the Bible. This lack is noted by John Ruthven in the state of the art reply to cessationist theology: *On the Cessation of the Charismata: The Protestant Polemic on Post-Biblical Miracles* which was referred to earlier in this chapter.

⁵² John MacArthur, *Strange Fire, The Danger of Offending the Holy Spirit with Counterfeit Worship* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2013), xvi.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, xvi.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, xv.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

The researcher wishes to point out that MacArthur's complaints about the behavior of some prominent figures in Pentecostal/charismatic culture are on the mark. MacArthur is accurate to note that many of the evangelical ministers involved in widely publicized scandals over the last three decades have been Pentecostals and charismatics.⁵⁶ These scandals have reflected badly on Pentecostal/charismatic culture. However, it does not logically follow that an emphasis on the gifts of the Holy Spirit produces immoral behavior. It is unlikely that non-charismatic evangelicals are immune from similar moral failure. The researcher is also sympathetic to MacArthur's concerns about the prosperity gospel. Americans are some of the richest people on the planet as well as some of the richest people in history. Excessive preoccupation with material things is certainly a feature of American culture. It has been difficult for the researcher to understand why a focus on gaining more and more wealth is seen as consistent with the gospel that Jesus proclaimed.

There are those who strive to keep a balance between emphasis on scripture and emphasis on the Holy Spirit's gifts. One of the best recent books to advocate retaining a marriage of word and Spirit is *Holy Fire* by R.T. Kendall. Kendall declares loyalty to expository preaching, justification by faith, and the sovereignty of God while remaining committed to signs, wonders, and miracles.⁵⁷ Kendall describes himself as a Reformed theologian, but also speaks in tongues.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ MacArthur, *Strange Fire*, 6.

⁵⁷ R.T. Kendall, *Holy Fire* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2014), xviii.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, xxxv.

If the reader is interested in a testimony of a prominent cessationist who later became a charismatic, Jack Deere's *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit* is a revealing case study. Deere was a ten-year veteran in the Old Testament department of Dallas Theological Seminary. Deere's viewpoint at the time was that God no longer gave the miraculous gifts of the Spirit. Deere saw no need for them because the New Testament canon was complete.⁵⁹ This outlook is a classic example of cessationist thinking from a professor at a seminary with a firm commitment to cessationism. It would serve just as well today as an example of the cessationist mindset in North America. Then Deere had a conversation with Dr. John White that changed Deere's theology. Previously, Deere had always been looking for Bible passages which would seem to confirm the cessationist stand. Now, for the first time, Deere began to study the Bible with an open mind. The result was dramatic: "My study of Scripture convinced me that God would heal and that healing ought to be a significant part of the church's ministry."⁶⁰

One particular aspect of divine healing ministry that is often poorly understood is deliverance ministry. Clark's *Ministry Team Training Manual* defines deliverance as "setting a person free from the oppression of a demonic spirit."⁶¹ Deliverance ministry is profoundly biblical. In Matthew 10:8 Jesus commands the twelve to "Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons." The gospels and Acts are filled with accounts of Jesus and the disciples driving demons from the suffering. The need for this ministry is just as great today as it was when Jesus walked the earth. Clark's *Ministry*

⁵⁹ Jack Deere, *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit: Discovering How God Speaks and Heals Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1993), 14.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 22.

⁶¹ Clark, *Ministry Team Training Manual*, 91.

Team Training Manual uses a ten-step model for deliverance that is based on the ministry of Pablo Bottari. The reader who wishes to understand deliverance should consult Bottari's book *Free in Christ* as it represents the state of the art in this particular area of ministry.

Bottari became experienced in deliverance ministry while attending crusades in Argentina led by evangelist Carlos Annacondia and has been personally involved in freeing over thirty thousand people from the oppression of evil spirits.⁶² Since 1996 Bottari has traveled around the globe teaching on this topic. Bottari gives a thorough explanation of why deliverance is necessary. The overarching rationale is that God's desire is to restore human beings to His image and likeness.⁶³ Too often the church has considered that a profession of faith in Jesus is all that a person needs. Bottari's experience as a crusade worker in Argentina revealed that 90% of the people who came forward for deliverance from demonic spirits were believers. They were still suffering from problems of the past which had never been dealt with.⁶⁴ Bottari teaches that believers have often made agreements with Satan in the form of petitions, invocations, and promises and that these commitments must be renounced in order to know joy and victory.⁶⁵

Another useful tool in the area of deliverance ministry is *Deliverance from Evil Spirits: A Practical Manual* by Francis MacNutt. North American believers might find it

⁶² Pablo Bottari, *Free in Christ* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2000), 21.

⁶³ Ibid., 56.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 60.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 66.

easier to relate to MacNutt as many of the case studies come from an American context while Bottari's come from Latin America. It is interesting to note that Bottari's book begins with the premise that evil spirits exist. It appears that the people to whom Bottari ministered in Argentina had a worldview that included the supernatural. Bottari makes no effort to prove the existence of evil spirits. MacNutt's book, on the other hand, has two chapters devoted to demonstration of the existence of demons. Chapter two points to the scriptural evidence for the existence of evil spirits and chapter three appeals to the evidence of human experience for the existence of devils. Why is it necessary for MacNutt to lay this groundwork? MacNutt explains that the Western world since the eighteenth-century Enlightenment has adopted a scientific worldview which rejects any reality beyond a material universe. For centuries Europeans and North Americans have doubted the existence of anything that cannot be measured. Therefore, the existence of angels and demons is ruled out.⁶⁶

MacNutt uses Mark's gospel as a brief example of how common was the ministry of deliverance in the ministry of Jesus. Even though Mark is the shortest gospel, there are thirteen references to Satan or the casting out of demons. Jesus performs four of the exorcisms and the disciples are involved in four cases.⁶⁷ MacNutt further demonstrates the prominence of deliverance ministry in the New Testament by noting that Luke's purpose in writing Acts was to show that the early church carried on the mission of Jesus by preaching, healing, and exorcism.⁶⁸ MacNutt explains that Western theologians,

⁶⁶ Francis MacNutt, *Deliverance from Evil Spirits: A Practical Manual* (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 1995), 43.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 38.

especially of the mainline churches, regard demon possession and exorcism as part of a primitive, pre-scientific worldview that did not have the knowledge to understand psychological problems. These theologians regard Jesus as being a typical man of his times which is to say that Jesus also was ignorant of the real causes of suffering.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ MacNutt, *Deliverance from Evil Spirits*, 39.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 42.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Having described the ministry focus in chapter two, it is now appropriate to outline a theoretical foundation for the ministry project. This foundation consists of three parts. Section one will establish the biblical basis for divine healing ministry. Healing ministry is a consistent activity of the people of God throughout the Old and New Testaments. If one takes seriously the example of God's people in scripture and the direct teaching found in the Bible, followers of Jesus today should be active in healing the sick. Such ministry is certainly a suitable topic for this research project. Section two will demonstrate that divine healing ministry has occurred throughout the history of the church and is therefore an appropriate ministry today for the church universal, and an appropriate endeavor for this research project. Section three, the theological foundation, will show that proper interpretation of scripture leads to the conclusion that God never intended for healing and other miraculous spiritual gifts to disappear from the church. On the contrary, healing and miracles were intended by God to continue until the return of Jesus Christ to earth. This research project is therefore justified on theological grounds. First, the biblical foundation.

The Biblical Foundation

Divine healing should be a key element of the ministry of the church of Jesus Christ. Although divine healing continues to be ministered by much of the global church, such ministry has become uncommon in North America and Europe. This is particularly unfortunate in denominations such as the Christian and Missionary Alliance which once offered a vigorous ministry of divine healing during the lifetime of its founder, Dr. A.B. Simpson, but now finds divine healing rare. If the church is to be faithful to its biblical commission, it must return to its roots and once again offer the ministry of divine healing.

The strongest rationale for the restoration of divine healing ministry is the Bible. Since Protestants, particularly evangelicals, consider the Bible to be the rule of faith and practice, the teachings of the Bible ought to be the weightiest factor in assessing the legitimacy of any ministry practice, including healing ministry. Therefore, this paper will examine the Old and New Testaments in order to demonstrate the consistent witness of scripture supporting the ministry of divine healing. This paper will show that divine healing has a biblical foundation which supports ongoing ministry. This evidence ought to be persuasive to an open-minded reader who holds to a high view of scripture.

We will begin with an examination of the Old Testament. To a casual reader it may appear that God suddenly became concerned about the sicknesses and infirmities of the human race during the ministry of Jesus. It is true that Christ ministered divine healing with a frequency and power that was stunning. Nevertheless, divine healing was not unknown in the experience of the people of Israel. One example would be the healing of infertility. In Genesis 20 there is the account of Abraham's relationship with Abimelech, king of Gerar. Abraham falsely represents Sarah as a sister and Abimelech

takes her into the harem. God appears to Abimelech and warns the king not to violate Sarah. The text indicates that Abimelech's action resulted in barrenness for Abimelech, Abimelech's wife, and even slave girls. The stricken ones are enabled to conceive again only when Abraham prays to God for healing.

A similar account of the healing of barrenness is recorded in Genesis 25. Rebekah is unable to conceive until Isaac prays to the Lord for healing. The scripture states that God answered and Rebekah becomes able to bear children. Keith Bailey comments on God's merciful intervention on behalf of the couple: "The simplicity of the account reveals the privilege of God's children to claim by prayer what is inherent in the covenant relationship."¹

In Numbers 21 there is a healing event which is a foreshadowing of the crucifixion and of the healing ministry of Christ. The Israelites are complaining against God and Moses and speaking in contempt of the manna from heaven. God's response is to send venomous snakes, and many Israelites die. The people admit their sin and request that Moses intercede for them. When Moses does so, the Lord commands the fabrication of a bronze replica of a snake which is to be raised on a pole. Anyone who looks at the snake recovers from the poison. The image of Christ on the cross, suffering for the sake of human sin and sickness must certainly come to mind. Matthew's gospel makes it plain: "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases" (Matt. 8:17).²

In Psalm 103 David exhorts the people of God to praise the Lord and to be mindful of the benefits of the covenant relationship with God. David cites two benefits in

¹ Keith Bailey, *Divine Healing: The Children's Bread* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1977), 63.

² *New Revised Standard Version Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1989)

quick succession: forgiveness of sins and healing of diseases. Actually, David refers to the forgiveness of all sins and the healing of all diseases. It would be tempting to dismiss David's comments on such extensive healing power as hyperbole, some literary flourish disconnected from reality. Such an interpretive stance, however, would demand that universal forgiveness be likewise regarded as exaggeration. Evangelicals would be quick to insist that God's forgiveness of sin is indeed all-encompassing. The reader of the psalm would be reasoning clearly to anticipate that the possibilities of divine healing must also be great. The Gospels likewise affirm that such extensive healing is possible. Matthew 8:16 records that, after ministering to Peter's mother-in-law, Jesus "cast out the spirits with a word, and cured all who were sick." Acts 5:16 contains a similar observation about the apostles: "A great number of people would also gather from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all cured." David's words in Psalm 103:1-3 recall these gospel passages:

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.
Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits—
who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases.

The reader of the Old Testament would not want to overlook the divine healing ministries of Elijah and Elisha. In 1 Kings 17 Elijah restores to life the son of a poor widow at Zarephath. Similarly, in 2 Kings 4 Elisha restores to life the son of the Shunammite woman. In 2 Kings 5 Naaman is healed of leprosy when Elisha orders the Aramean to wash seven times in the Jordan. In 2 Kings 20 Isaiah informs Hezekiah that the king will die soon. Hezekiah's desperate prayer to God results in a message from God through the prophet Isaiah that Hezekiah's life would be extended fifteen years.

Isaiah refers again to divine healing in Isaiah 53 in a prophecy about the ministry of the coming Messiah: “Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases,” says the prophet (Is. 53:4). The reader might overlook the significance of this passage if it were not quoted by the Gospel of Matthew in chapter 8. In a description of Jesus’ ministry of healing to the sick and the demon-possessed, Matthew says specifically that Jesus’ healing ministry was the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy: “This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah, ‘He took our infirmities and bore our diseases’” (Matt. 8:17).

Among numerous Old Testament texts referring to the ministry of divine healing, Exodus 15:26 may be one of the most significant for this thesis:

If you will listen carefully to the voice of the Lord your God and do what is right in his sight, and give heed to his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will not bring on you any of the diseases that I brought on the Egyptians; for I am the Lord who heals you.

This passage teaches that the twin expectations of listening to the Lord and of obeying the divine voice are the clear prerequisites for healing. More, listening and obeying are the keys to knowing the Lord. It is later revealed in Exodus 19 that God’s plan for the Israelites is that each individual be consecrated to God’s service: “Indeed, the whole earth is mine, but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation” (Ex. 19:6). This is a high calling indeed. When the Lord descends on Mt. Sinai in Exodus 20, the people encounter thunder, lightning, trumpet sound, and smoke. It seems apparent that God’s intention is that every Israelite hear and respond to the divine voice. Instead, the Israelites say to Moses: “You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, or we will die” (Ex. 20:19). The fulfillment of the Lord’s intention to have an intimate relationship with believers was delayed until the New Covenant when Jesus

modeled a lifestyle of direct communication with God and sent the Holy Spirit to indwell each believer.

Now we will assess the evidence of the New Testament. The ministry of divine healing in the New Testament rises to an entirely different level. This should not be surprising since God gave advance notice that the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the time of Jesus would be dramatically increased. For example, the prophet Joel spoke of a time when a universal access of believers to the power of the Holy Spirit was coming:

Then afterward I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female slaves, in those days, I will pour out my Spirit (Joel 2:28-29).

The prophet Isaiah also prophesied of the era of the Holy Spirit's coming:

My spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouths of your children, or out of the mouths of your children's children, says the Lord, from now on and forever (Is. 59:21).

These prophecies were fulfilled in Acts 2 on the day of Pentecost. Acts 2 was not only the fulfillment of Joel's and Isaiah's inspired words, but also of the prophecy of John the Baptist recorded in Luke's Gospel:

John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Luke 3:16).

Jesus himself had forecast the era of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit:

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

One result of the mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the New Covenant was the tremendous increase in the frequency of healing ministry. Jesus, the apostles, and

other members of the early church performed healing so regularly it seems commonplace. Morton Kelsey notes the frequency this way: “Nearly one-fifth of the entire gospels is devoted to Jesus’ healing and discussions occasioned by it.”³ Healing clearly was a primary rather than a secondary concern for Jesus of Nazareth. Kelsey elaborates:

Instead we find that everywhere Jesus went he functioned as a religious healer. Forty-one distinct instances of physical and mental healing are recorded in the four gospels (there are seventy-two accounts in all, including duplications), but this by no means represents the total. Many of these references summarize the healings of large numbers of people.⁴

An examination of the Gospel of Mark reveals in detail the intense pursuit of healing by Jesus. In chapter one Jesus drives out an evil spirit in the synagogue in Capernaum. Jesus then proceeds to heal Peter’s mother-in-law of a fever and, after sunset, drives out more demons and heals many people from various diseases. The next day Jesus travels throughout Galilee, preaching in synagogues and driving out demons. Chapter one finishes with a leprous man begging Jesus for healing. Jesus declares willingness to heal the man and commands him to be healed. It cannot be coincidental that Mark places the story of the leper at the outset of the gospel. Jesus’ compassion for the leper and willingness to heal is characteristic of the Savior’s entire earthly ministry. There is no occasion in the four gospels where Jesus ever refuses to heal a suffering person.

In chapter two of Mark Jesus heals a paralyzed man. In chapter three Jesus heals a man with a withered hand. Later healings draw such large crowds that people push forward to touch Jesus. Evil spirits cry out at the sight of the Savior. In chapter five Jesus

³ Morton Kelsey, *Healing and Christianity* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1995), 42.

⁴ Ibid., 43.

heals the Gerasene demoniac and a woman with chronic bleeding is cured. Jesus raises the daughter of Jairus from the dead. Chapter six finds Jesus in Nazareth where there is so little faith that the Savior can only heal a few individuals. Jesus then sends out the twelve to perform healing ministry. The twelve drive out many demons and heal many sick people. In chapter seven Jesus drives a demon out of the daughter of a Syrophoenician woman and heals a deaf/mute man. In chapter eight Jesus heals a blind man at Bethsaida. In chapter nine Jesus drives a demon out of a young boy. In chapter ten Jesus heals blind Bartimaeus. An unbiased reader cannot ignore the passion of Jesus for healing ministry.

Again, healing was a primary rather than a secondary element in the ministry of Jesus. This would not be apparent from the ministry of the contemporary church in North America and Europe, but it is plain from the gospel records. As just seen in the gospel of Mark, Jesus spent considerable time and energy healing the sick. It was not an afterthought. To the contrary, it was very intentional. When Jesus announced the agenda for his ministry in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4:18-19), it included “recovery of sight to the blind.” Today’s western church tends to see such statements of Jesus as metaphor, as if Jesus meant that he would help people to become more perceptive. In fact, Jesus proceeded to restore vision to people who were unable to see. Apparently, God cares very much about the plight of those who are sick and have broken bodies. Keith Bailey comments on the compassionate nature of God:

That much of the supernatural ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ should be devoted to healing is most significant. The miracles of Christ were not promotional items, but were deliberately designed compassionate acts to relieve human suffering. They are an index to the very heart of God.⁵

⁵ Bailey, 101.

It is clear in the gospels that Jesus never had any intention of restricting the ministry of healing to himself. Jesus explicitly directed the disciples to perform healing ministry as well (Mark 6:7-13; Matthew 10:5-10; Luke 9:1-6).⁶

An examination of the book of Acts reveals many instances of divine healing ministry. Acts 3 finds Peter involved in the restoration of the crippled beggar. Acts 5:12 gives this summary: “Now many signs and wonders were done among the people through the apostles.” Acts 5:16 records that crowds were “bringing the sick and those tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all cured.” Acts 8:13 explains that Simon the sorcerer followed Philip and that he was “amazed when he saw the signs and miracles that took place.” In Acts 9:18 Ananias ministers healing to Paul who was blinded by Jesus on the Damascus Road. Acts 9:34 records the healing of a paralytic through Peter’s ministry, and Acts 9:40-41 describes the raising of Tabitha from the dead. Acts 13 and following chapters relate the numerous healings and miracles performed by the apostle Paul. These will be treated individually later in this paper.

Francis MacNutt, commenting on the Acts of the Apostles, has this to say about the earliest Christians: Just as Jesus combined both preaching and healing in his presentation of the gospel, the early apostles carried on that tradition with no diminution of power.⁷

MacNutt gives as an example the case of Acts 4:29-30 where the apostles had been threatened by the authorities and told to discontinue their preaching. The apostles pray for boldness and ask God to heal and work miracles. MacNutt then comments on the

⁶ Kelsey, 43.

⁷ Francis MacNutt, *Healing* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2009), 44.

apostolic attitude that the ministry of healing was an essential part of proclaiming the gospel:

Notice that they did not pray to preach and to heal, but to preach by healing. They preached the message of salvation by actually continuing the works of Jesus. A doctrine of God's salvation without that salvation actually taking place, or a doctrine about healing without God's power to make healing actually take place, is empty rhetoric. Perhaps this is why so much of today's preaching impresses people as abstract and irrelevant.⁸

Bailey concurs with MacNutt that the early church continued the healing works of Jesus and that this is abundantly evident in the Acts of the Apostles. Bailey sees strong continuity between the healing ministry of Jesus and the ongoing ministry of the apostles: "As the four Gospels present the healing Christ, the Acts of the Apostles present the healing church. The church Christ is building in the world is the living expression of himself."⁹ Cases of healing ministry by the early believers are as abundant in the Acts of the Apostles as are the cases of healing by Jesus in the gospels. Bailey comments on the frequency and the wide variety of healing ministers:

The book of Acts contains twenty references to divine healings ministered by the early Christians. The methods used are varied. The ministry of healing was not restricted to apostles. Laymen like Stephen, Philip, and Ananias were used of the Lord to heal physical afflictions.¹⁰

The ministry of the Apostle Paul was definitely a continuation of the healing ministry of Jesus and of the twelve. Acts 9 records that Paul's first experience with healing ministry was just days after the conversion on the Damascus road. Paul's encounter with Jesus left the apostle blind for three days. Ananias puts his hands on Paul

⁸ MacNutt, *Healing*, 44.

⁹ Bailey, 113.

¹⁰ Ibid., 120.

and the result is immediate restoration of sight. This would have been a striking example to the apostle of the reality of healing ministry. In Acts 14 Paul speaks healing to a lame person in Lystra and the crippled one is instantly restored. Acts 16 has the account of Paul driving out a spirit of a slave girl. Acts 19 records that handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched Paul were taken to the sick and their illnesses were cured. Acts 20 tells of Eutychus being killed in a fall. Paul holds Eutychus and life is restored. In Acts 21 on Malta, Paul prays for the father of Publius and the father is healed from fever and dysentery. Many other sick on the island come and are healed also.

Paul confirms the testimony of others by commenting on healing ministry in the epistles. The apostle reveals repeatedly that the supernatural was a key part of ministry. In 2 Corinthians 12:12 Paul declares: “The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, signs and wonders and mighty works.” In Romans 15:18-19 Paul says:

For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to win obedience from the Gentiles, by word and deed, by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and as far around as Illyricum I have fully proclaimed the good news of Christ.

Paul not only carried on a powerful healing ministry personally, but expected such ministry to be normal practice in the churches. For example, the apostle’s teaching on spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 includes gifts of healing and miraculous powers (1 Cor. 12:9-10). Paul regards the exercise of these spiritual gifts to be so common that certain individuals are regarded as having ministries in these areas. According to Paul, there are workers of miracles (1 Cor. 12:29) and those who have gifts of healing (1 Cor. 12:30). Apparently, some of the believers in Corinth experienced healing and miracles on

an ongoing basis. It was a normal part of church life along with many other gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The only comments of Paul that could be even considered as a suggestion that healing ministry (and the rest of the charismata) would cease to be exercised is 1 Corinthians 13:8-10. Paul states that prophecy and tongues will cease to be exercised at some point: “But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end” (1Cor. 13:8). When will this take place? Paul’s only guidance consists of a single verse: “For we know only in part, and we prophecy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end.” Of course, everything depends on the meaning of “complete” (to teleion). Cessationists have been certain that complete refers to the New Testament canon, meaning that the formation of the canon makes the charismata unnecessary and dispensable. Gordon Fee rightly points out that the cessationist view is highly unlikely, for neither Paul nor the Corinthian believers would have known anything about the formation of an acknowledged New Testament canon.¹¹ It is a basic principle of Bible interpretation that the text must have meant something to the speaker and the listeners. Fee argues that “complete” refers not to anything in the present age, but to the eschaton, the age of the second coming of Christ:

At the coming of Christ the final purpose of God’s saving work in Christ will have been reached.; at that point those gifts now necessary for the building up of the church in the present age will disappear, because “the complete” will have come.¹²

Jon Ruthven points out that the early church fathers argued that “the complete” in

¹¹ Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987), 645.

¹² *Ibid.*, 646.

1 Corinthians 13:10 was the second advent of Christ and that the future state of the parousia was proof that the Montanists were wrong in their assertion that they had reached perfection.¹³ Ruthven also refers to a study by Gary Shogren which found that *to teleion* in the early church fathers consistently refers to the second coming.¹⁴

Paul's approval of divine healing has not escaped the attention of scholars.

Gordon Fee sees a clear connection between Paul and his predecessors:

We may conclude, therefore, that all the evidence points in one direction: for Paul and his churches the Spirit is not only the absolute key to their understanding of Christian life—from beginning to end—but above all else the Spirit was experienced, and experienced in ways that were essentially powerful and visible.¹⁵

If the ministry of divine healing is indeed a foundational element in Christian life and ministry, it should appear throughout the New Testament beyond the experience of the twelve and, in fact, this is just what the reader of the New Testament will find. James 5 gives explicit instructions to the believer who is sick. The sick one is to take the initiative by calling the elders of the local church. The elders are instructed to pray for him and to anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. James is so confident in the reality of the ministry of healing that a bold declaration is made: "The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up" (James 5:15). This is a stunning statement of confidence. It should be noted that James, (the Lord's brother) was not expressing such confidence in the prayers of apostles. Rather, James has in mind the prayers of unnamed and historically insignificant local church elders. Apparently, in the time of James, it was

¹³Jon Ruthven, *On the Cessation of the Charismata* (Tulsa, OK: Word & Spirit Press, 2011), 122.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 123.

¹⁵ Gordon Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 895.

certain that effective healing ministry could be performed by any group of elders. It is the position of this paper that such healing ministry should likewise be available in local churches throughout the world today.

This paper will now focus on two particular scripture passages, both commissioning accounts involving Jesus and the disciples, in order to further demonstrate that there is biblical basis for the proposition that divine healing ministry should be a key element in the contemporary church of Jesus Christ. The first account is Matthew 28:16-20 and is widely referred to as the Great Commission. The second account is Luke 9:1-6. First, Matthew's episode will be considered:

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the very end of the age (Matt. 28:16-20).

A basic principle of biblical interpretation is for the reader to ask to whom the scripture passage is addressed. In Matthew 28:16-20 it is clear that Jesus is speaking to the original band of disciples minus Judas. The text specifically states that it was the eleven disciples who went to Galilee. The eleven were keeping an appointment with Jesus. The passage culminates with Jesus issuing a command to the eleven. First, Jesus declares the authority by which the command is issued. Then Jesus orders the eleven to make disciples of all people groups. According to Jesus, this discipling process consists of two elements: baptizing the new disciples and teaching them to obey everything which Jesus had previously impressed on the eleven.

Even though Matthew 28:16-20 was spoken by Jesus specifically to the eleven, this passage is almost universally regarded by contemporary evangelicals as being applicable to all Christians at all times, that is to say that all Christians are responsible to make disciples and that this process must be performed among every people group in the world. That the Great Commission applies to all believers rather than to the eleven alone is virtually an axiom of evangelical Christianity.

Turning to Luke 9, there is the account of Jesus sending out the twelve early in the disciples' journey with the master. Jesus has a specific agenda for the disciples: "he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal." In contrast to the approach to Matthew 28, North American evangelicals see Luke 9 as a commission directed to the twelve and to no one else. Perhaps it is more accurate to say that North American evangelicals have a hermeneutic that would divide Jesus' command in Luke 9 into two commands, one that applies today (preaching the kingdom of God) and one that does not apply today (healing the sick).

In *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, Klein, Blomberg, and Hubbard propose a four-step methodology for legitimate application of scripture texts. The first two steps are as follows:

1. Determine the original application(s) intended by the passage.
2. Evaluate the level of specificity of these applications. Are they transferable across time and space to other audiences?¹⁶

Regarding Luke 9 and Jesus' command to the disciples to preach the kingdom of

¹⁶ William Klein, Craig Blomberg, Robert Hubbard, Jr., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Dallas, TX: Word, 1993), 407.

God and to heal the sick, there is nothing that would automatically prevent Christians in all times and places from obeying both directives. Jesus makes no distinction between the preaching and the healing ministry. Jesus gives no indication that one (preaching) will continue indefinitely and that the other (healing) will cease in the near future. There is nothing in the passage itself that would justify such a dichotomy. Why should future believers around the world not obey the two commands as diligently as the twelve? Thus, there is no hermeneutical reason why divine healing should not be a ministry of contemporary Christians unless the reader has a preexisting bias toward unbelief or cessationist theology. There is nothing intrinsic about divine healing ministry that would disqualify it from being implemented among any Christian population in any age. In fact, healing ministry is widely practiced by today's Christians around the world with the exception of Europe and North America as has been pointed out by Candy Gunther Brown.¹⁷

In the two commissioning accounts of Jesus' disciples which have already been cited, there is strong interconnectedness in favor of regarding Luke 9 as being applicable to all Christians as certainly as Matthew 28. The command of Jesus in Matthew 28 states that the discipling of the earth's peoples must include teaching the future Christians to obey "everything that I have commanded you." Luke 9 includes preaching the kingdom of God and healing the sick. The ministry of divine healing is an essential element in the teaching which the eleven receive from Jesus. Therefore, divine healing must be ministered as long as the preaching of the kingdom continues.

¹⁷ Candy Gunther Brown, *Global Pentecostal*, 3.

Today's evangelicals are enthusiastic about the need to be comprehensive in the teaching of Christian disciples. A comment on Matthew 28 from the *NIV Bible*

Commentary is representative:

Remarkably, Jesus does not foresee a time when any part of his teaching will be rightly judged needless, outmoded, superseded, or untrue: everything he has commanded must be passed on "to the very end of the age." What the disciples teach is not mere dogma steeped in abstract theorizing but content to be obeyed.¹⁸

Indeed. The teaching of Jesus is to be obeyed. All of the teaching of Jesus is to be obeyed. The teaching of Jesus covers many aspects of life and, as demonstrated in this paper, it includes healing ministry. Healing ministry and the proclamation of the kingdom were joined in Jesus' own ministry. Jesus commanded the twelve to include healing ministry with the proclamation of the kingdom (Luke 9). The disciples proceeded to minister in both power and word during their work recorded in the gospels. The disciples continued to minister in both power and word as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. The ministry of healing was a prominent part of the efforts of the apostle Paul both in his life and in his teaching. The ongoing ministry of healing was never intended to cease, as demonstrated in James 5 where any group of local church elders is expected to be capable of healing the sick.

Wherever there is unwillingness to offer the ministry of divine healing, it should not be a result of any biblical command or example, for the scriptures are simply full of healing ministry through the people of God. As shown in this paper, the evidence is quite extensive. Therefore, hesitancy to engage in healing ministry should be attributed to other factors. The philosophy that spiritual gifts have ceased (cessationism) has been around

¹⁸ Kenneth L. Barker and John R. Kohlenberger III eds., *NIV Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1994), 134.

for a long time despite the fact that it is not supported by scripture. Ruthven sees a steady stream of cessationist thinkers through the ages: Montanists, Chrysostom, Ambrosiaster, Gregory the Great, Thomas Aquinas, John Calvin, and Enlightenment era philosophers.¹⁹ Though unscriptural, cessationism continues today to be pervasive in the contemporary evangelical church of Europe and North America. An analysis of cessationism itself will wait for a later chapter.

The Historical Foundation

The thesis of this project is that divine healing is a key element of the ministry of the church of Jesus Christ, and that it should be restored in the churches of North America, particularly in denominations such as the Christian and Missionary Alliance which once offered vigorous healing ministries. The first section of this chapter demonstrated that there is biblical basis for the restoration of divine healing ministry. Both the Old and New Testaments model divine healing ministry. This section will demonstrate that divine healing ministry continued to be practiced throughout church history and that it did not disappear with the writing of the New Testament. Thus, there is strong precedent for the practice of divine healing ministry.

Divine healing ministry was commonly practiced by the early Christian church. It appears numerous times in the Acts of the Apostles, the history book of the infant church. Speaking of the earliest followers of Jesus, MacMullen says, “Likewise in the next generation, the Apostles’ success in winning recruits arose from their deeds, above all, in

¹⁹ Ruthven, *On the Cessation*, 76.

healing.”²⁰ The practice of divine healing after that era is less well known, but evidence for its continuation is substantial. Divine healing may eventually have been practiced less often after the Apostles, but it never disappeared from the ministry of the church. Bailey reports that, between A.D. 95 and 315, more than thirty-six church fathers wrote about incidents of divine healing.²¹

For example, there are multiple references to divine healing in the writings of the Ante-Nicene fathers. Justin Martyr (A.D. 100-165) makes one of the earliest references in the *Second Apology of Justin*:

For numberless demoniacs throughout the whole world, and in your city, many of our Christian men exorcising them in the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, having healed and do heal, rendering helpless and driving the possessing devils out of the men.²²

Another prominent church father of this time was Irenaeus (A.D. 125-200) who was a contemporary of Justin Martyr. Irenaeus was familiar with exorcism and divine healing:

For some do certainly and truly drive out devils, so that those who have been thus cleansed from evil spirits frequently both believe, and join themselves to the church. Others have foreknowledge of things to come: they see visions and utter prophetic expressions. Others still heal the sick by laying their hands upon them, and they are made whole.²³

²⁰ Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire* (A.D. 100-400) (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), 22.

²¹ Bailey, 200.

²² Justin Martyr, “The Second Apology of Justin,” vol. 1 of *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. Rev. Alexander Roberts (New York, NY: Cossimo Classics, 2007), 190.

²³ Irenaeus, “Against Heresies,” vol.1 of *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 409.

Today in the European and North American church the ministry of divine healing is often associated with the uneducated and unsophisticated, as if there were a correlation between belief in the supernatural and ignorance. This is unfortunate since there is no logical connection and simply reflects bias against the miraculous in the western church. Historically, some of the most brilliant minds in the early church believed in the miraculous, witnessed miraculous events, recorded them, and sometimes were personally involved in them. Kelsey points out that Tertullian (A.D. 160-240) was a judge and wrote some of the finest Latin of his time, and Origen's intellectual ability was admired by Christians and non-Christians alike.²⁴ Hyatt notes that Tertullian was an influential leader in the church at Carthage and the best known apologist of the Western church.²⁵ Tertullian and Origen demonstrate that intellectual ability and divine healing ministry are compatible. The contemporary church should take note. One of Tertullian's accounts of healing follows:

The clerk of one of them, who was liable to be thrown upon the ground by an evil spirit, was set free from his affliction; as was also the relative of another, and the little boy of a third. And how many men of rank (to say nothing of common people) have been delivered from devils, and healed of diseases!²⁶

In *Against Celsus* (an apologetic work meant to counter pagan thinking), Origen (A.D. 185-284) writes about divine healing ministry:

Some give evidence of their having received through this faith a marvelous power by the cures which they perform, invoking no other name over those who need their help than that of the God of all things, and of Jesus, along with a mention of His history. For by these means we too have seen many persons free from grievous calamities, and from distractions of mind, and

²⁴ Kelsey, 108.

²⁵ Eddie Hyatt, *2000 Years of Charismatic Christianity* (Lake Mary, FL: Charisma House, 2002), 17.

²⁶ Tertullian, "To Scapula," vol. 4 of *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 107.

madness, and countless other ills, which could not be cured neither by men nor by devils.²⁷

This ongoing healing ministry may sound foreign to North American evangelicals who are accustomed to thinking of healing as a sign given to authenticate the message about Jesus until the New Testament was written and divine healing was no longer necessary. If, however, divine healing is not fundamentally an apologetic device but rather an essential part of the gospel itself, then nothing would be more normal than for the believers to minister healing indefinitely. The divine plan revealed in the New Testament was that the gospel should be manifested in both word and power until the return of Christ. For the early Christians, healing was not a secondary matter at all; it was a core issue, inseparable from the spoken message of substitutionary atonement and forgiveness of sins. MacNutt has written:

Much as it may offend our modern sensibilities, the approach to religion in the early church was very simple. Just as Jesus attracted crowds by his miracles and sent his disciples out two by two to heal and cast out evil spirits, so, too, the early Christians emphasized healing and exorcism as the chief instrument of conversion.²⁸

Sadly, much of the church gradually lost the ability to minister divine healing. This was not a result of divine strategy but of spiritual impotence. Hyatt argues that the church responded to heresies such as Gnosticism and Marcionism by formalizing worship and shifting power to bishops. Both changes tended to reduce spontaneity and the ministry of charismatic gifts such as healing.²⁹ These factors were very significant, but they were no doubt eclipsed by the merger of church and state which occurred with the

²⁷ Origen, "Against Celsus," vol. 4 of *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 473.

²⁸ MacNutt, *Healing*, 46.

²⁹ Hyatt, 24.

conversion of Constantine in A.D. 312. Now that it was a political advantage to be part of the church, many unconverted people entered into its life. The church became an organization rather than a spiritual organism.

After Constantine became emperor, divine healing became rare in the life of the institutional church along with spiritual decline in general. This is not to say, however, that the ministry of divine healing or other charismatic gifts ceased entirely. Some believers were repelled by the worldliness of the institutional church and began to seek God in solitude. It seems that the Holy Spirit responded to their heartfelt seeking and began to stir in them. Eventually these earnest individuals gathered together into communities which became known as monasteries. The monks dedicated themselves to study and prayer. One manifestation of their intense spiritual devotion was the preservation of books and manuscripts. Another manifestation was ministry of Holy Spirit gifts such as healing. Hyatt comments on the connection between healing and the monastic movement:

Many monks gained notoriety for their power in prayer and their ability to produce healing, deliverance from demonic oppression and other miraculous phenomena. Church fathers such as Athanasius, Augustine and Jerome, who speak of miracles, either practiced the monastic lifestyle themselves or were closely associated with those who did.³⁰

The theology of Augustine (A.D. 354-430) was a major influence in the decline of divine healing in the Roman Catholic church. Augustine's strong influence was the result of two important factors. First, Augustine was the most dominant theologian in the West for a thousand years. Second, Augustine's early writings held that believers should not

³⁰ Hyatt, 38.

expect healing gifts to be in operation.³¹ Clark contends that Augustine's theology represented a major shift from the biblical worldview of warfare (in which Christ is the victor over Satan, sin and sickness) to a blueprint worldview which had a strong predestination component. The practical difference was the early church viewed sickness as an enemy to be battled and overcome through the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the name of Jesus. Augustine, on the other hand, saw sickness as something that should be passively accepted while the sufferer looked for redemptive effect upon the soul. Eventually, Augustine's view interpreted sickness to be the will of God designed for sanctification and thus sickness should not be prayed against.³²

Augustine underwent a dramatic change in attitude toward divine healing late in life. Kelsey attributes the genesis of this transformation to the healing of a brother and sister who were healed from convulsive seizures on Easter morning in 424 A.D.³³ By the time Augustine wrote *The City of God*, it is obvious that divine healing was now a reality: In *The City of God*, Augustine describes healings from blindness, cancer, gout, demon possession and the raising of the dead.³⁴

The Protestant Reformers would not be considered advocates of divine healing ministry. The Reformers were breaking away from the Roman Catholic church and refuting many of its beliefs and practices. For example, the Roman Catholics pointed to healing and other miracles throughout history as evidence for the veracity of their

³¹ Kelsey, 145.

³² Randy Clark, *The Healing River* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Global Awakening, 2013), 45.

³³ Kelsey, 146.

³⁴ Augustine, "The City of God," vol. 2 of *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, ed. Philip Schaff (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans., 1978), 485.

doctrine. Since the Reformers were challenging the legitimacy of the Roman Catholic church, it was necessary to attack the theological foundation on which it stood. So, the Reformers proceeded to deny the validity of all divine healing claims after the ministry of the early apostles. Therefore, according to the reasoning of the Reformers, the Roman Catholic church was as illegitimate as its false healing accounts.

In spite of their cessationist theological position, however, the Reformers were faced with the necessity of ministering to the practical needs of their own families and followers. There are some records of prayer for the sick and subsequent recovery. Martin Luther once stated, “Often has it happened, and still does, that devils have been driven out in the name of Christ; also by calling on His name and prayer, the sick have been healed.”³⁵ Another instance took place when Philip Melancthon was near to death. Luther prayed and then, took Melancthon by the hand and said, “Be of good courage, Philip, you shall not die.” Melancthon recovered soon afterward.³⁶

Divine healing ministry also occurred in the 17th century among the Quakers and instances of healing appear in their records. George Fox (1624-91) was very familiar with healing and wrote about it in *Fox's Journal* and *Book of Miracles*. Hyatt located this example from *Fox's Journal*:

In his *Journal*, Fox tells of the healing of fellow Quaker, John Banks, who had lost the use of his right arm and hand. The problem had begun with excruciating pain that descended from his shoulder into his arm and hand. In vain, Banks had sought help from physicians. Finally, with all hope gone, he had a dream in which he asked Fox to lay his hand on his shoulder and pray for healing. The dream was so real that he sought Fox and shared with him his dream. Fox laid his hand on him and simply said, “The Lord strengthen thee within and without.”

³⁵ A. J. Gordon, *The Ministry of Healing* (Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, 1961), 92.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 94.

Banks stayed at the home of a friend that evening, and while eating supper, he suddenly realized that he had perfect use of his arm and hand.³⁷

Kelsey notes that Fox and the other Quakers might have left more written records about healing, but that they were often accused of demonism and blasphemy.³⁸ It is ironic that these same charges were made against Jesus. Matthew 10:25 indicates that Jesus was called Beelzebul by outraged opponents. Luke 11:15 records that Jesus' enemies asserted that Jesus cast out demons by Belzebul, the ruler of demons. Similar charges are sometimes made against contemporary ministers of divine healing. As far as skepticism about divine healing ministry is concerned, it appears that there is nothing new under the sun.

Pioneers in the modern era of the divine healing movement were located in Germany and Switzerland. Johannes Christopher Blumhardt was probably the most prominent figure during the early nineteenth century. In 1842 Blumhardt was a pastor in a village church in the Black Forest. A girl in his church was oppressed by demonic forces and it was only after a two-year battle that deliverance came. People began to flock to Blumhardt's church looking for healing and many received. In 1846 church authorities investigated the events and ordered Blumhardt to discontinue divine healing ministry.³⁹ Blumhardt later left the church at Mottlingen and went to Bad Boll where he purchased a large home and entered into full-time healing ministry. There Blumhardt offered Bible

³⁷ Hyatt, 91.

³⁸ Kelsey, 183.

³⁹ Ibid., 185.

teaching, counseling, prayer, and laying on of hands for healing.⁴⁰ So much healing occurred in Bad Boll that others began healing centers in Europe and in America.

In addition to Blumhardt, Dorothea Trudel of Switzerland was another European who pioneered divine healing ministry. Trudel was a factory owner in Switzerland who became concerned when four employees became ill and did not respond to medical care. Trudel prayed about how to proceed and the biblical model of the prayer of faith came to mind. Trudel's ministry to the sick workers resulted in healing.⁴¹ Trudel later established a healing home in Mannendorf where many were healed of physical and mental afflictions. Trudel's ministry was widely publicized.⁴²

Eventually, the practice of divine healing ministry made its way from Europe to America. Bailey attributes the spread of such ministry to conferences organized by W.R. Boardman in Great Britain. Boardman was American and known to many ministers in the U.S. One event that served as a connecting bridge was the Bethshan Conference on the Deeper Life and Divine Healing. Some of the speakers were Otto Stockmayer, Samuel Zeller, and Johannes Blumhardt. Among the American ministers in attendance were Dr. Charles Cullis and Dr. A.B. Simpson.⁴³

One individual who played a major role in the later nineteenth century movement of divine healing was Dr. A. B. Simpson, the founder of the Christian & Missionary Alliance. Simpson was not the first in that era to emphasize divine healing, but was one

⁴⁰ Bailey, 216.

⁴¹ Kelsey, 184.

⁴² Bailey, 218.

⁴³ Ibid., 218.

of the most prominent proponents. For the purposes of this study, Simpson could serve as a case study not only of the possibilities of a divine healing ministry, but also why divine healing matters at all, for Simpson was a receiver of divine healing before ever ministering to someone else. Though Simpson was incredibly robust in later ministry, the early ministry left the Alliance founder a very sick man. Simpson himself describes his condition like this:

After my college studies were completed, I became at age 21 the ambitious pastor of a large city church. Plunging headlong into my work, I again broke down with heart trouble and had to go away for months of rest, returning at length, as it seemed at the time, to die. Rallying, however, and slowly recovering in part, I labored on for years with the aid of constant remedies and preventives. I carried a bottle of ammonia in my pocket and would have taken a nervous spasm if I had ventured out without it. Again and again, while climbing a slight elevation or going up stairs, an awful and suffocating agony would come over me, and the thought of that bottle as a last resort quieted me.⁴⁴

It should not be assumed that Simpson achieved little during this period. Simpson was considered a successful pastor. Unfortunately, Simpson's physical and mental stamina were inadequate for the challenges of the work. The stress Simpson experienced was not imaginary. Simpson's poor condition was verified by medical professionals:

A few months before I took Christ as my Healer, a prominent physician in New York insisted on speaking to me about my health. He told me that I had not constitutional strength enough to last more than a few months. He required my taking immediate measures for the preservation of my life and usefulness.⁴⁵

Not long afterward Simpson was asked to pray for a man in his congregation on the verge of death. Simpson did so, and was astonished to find the man was instantly healed. The man lived for years and reported to Simpson that the healing was a

⁴⁴ A. B. Simpson, *The Gospel of Healing* (Camp Hill, PA: Wing Spread Publishers, 1986), 119.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 121.

miracle.⁴⁶ During the same year Simpson heard many testimonies from people who said that they had been healed simply by trusting in Christ, as they would for salvation.⁴⁷

Simpson began to study the Bible to determine whether or not healing was indeed an essential part of the gospel. Simpson concluded that it was, and felt that it was necessary to personally appropriate the truths of the scripture. On a Friday afternoon Simpson went into the pine woods of Old Orchard Beach, Maine and made three pledges to God:

As I shall meet Thee in that day, I solemnly accept this truth as part of Thy word and of the gospel of Christ. Thou helping me, I shall never question it until I meet Thee there. As I shall meet Thee in that day, I take the Lord Jesus as my physical life for all the needs of my body until my life work is done. Thou helping me, I shall never doubt that Thou dost so become my life and strength from this moment and wilt keep me under all circumstances until thy blessed coming and until all Thy will for me is perfectly fulfilled. As I shall meet Thee in that day, I solemnly agree to speak of it or minister in connection with it in any way in which thou mayest call me or others may need me in the future.⁴⁸

A.B. Simpson was true to these pledges and the word of God proved true.

Simpson did recover, and the pastor entered into a period of ministry which required what Simpson himself estimated as four times more labor than any previous years.⁴⁹

The results of the profound change in Simpson's theology of healing extended far beyond Simpson's own health and became a divine healing ministry. John Sawin, Simpson

⁴⁶ Simpson, *The Gospel of Healing*, 124.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 124.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 125.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 131.

In *Genuine Gold: The Cautiously Charismatic Story of the Early Christian and Missionary Alliance*, King describes some of Simpson's experiences in healing ministry:

As mentioned in the Introduction, Simpson had a charismatic anointing in which he received prophetic insight, and dramatic healing touches with unusual manifestations at times occurred through his ministry. More than two decades before the Azusa Street Pentecostal Revival, a remarkable charismatic anointing for healing manifested as Simpson and others who became leaders of the fledgling Christian and Missionary Alliance prayed for people for healing.⁵¹

King notes that Simpson began Friday afternoon healing meetings in 1882 that attracted as many as 1000 participants and that they continued for thirty years. In 1883 Simpson established Berachah Healing Home where the sick could receive teaching and prayer.⁵² The Berachah Healing Home became well known and it was extremely fruitful. During its first sixteen months of operation, it ministered to over 700 guests and many more visitors.⁵³

It is interesting to note that Berachah Healing Home became a reality as a result of the healing experience of one man. E.G. Selchow was a successful New York businessman whose health was so broken that doctors said that Selchow would not survive two years. Selchow was healed under Simpson's ministry and proceeded to purchase a large home in New York City for the purpose of making divine healing available to many others.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Simpson, *The Gospel of Healing*, 3.

⁵¹ Paul King, *Genuine Gold* (Tulsa, OK: Word & Spirit Press, 2006), 25.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 24.

⁵³ Robert Niklaus, *All For Jesus* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1986), 57.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 57.

It appears that neither Simpson nor his associates felt it necessary to document the many cases of divine healing which took place in their ministry. Only a few are mentioned. Simpson wanted to avoid any kind of personal acclaim, so perhaps this is the reason for the neglect of a detailed record. The few references made by Simpson do indicate, however, that there were abundant healings. Simpson makes a brief comment in *The Gospel of Healing*: “The cases of healing that have come under my notice in these years would fill many volumes. They have represented all social extremes, all religious opinions, all professions and callings and all classes of disease.”⁵⁵

There are only a few instances where Simpson describes individual cases in detail, but the cases mentioned are powerful and consistent with the signs and wonders recorded in the Gospels and in the Acts of the Apostles:

One of the most remarkable in the early days was a woman who had not bent her joints for eight years. She used to stand in our meetings on her crutches, unable to sit down during the whole service. She had not sat for eight years. She was healed in a moment, and all in the house were filled with wonder. Another was cured of spinal curvature. A great many have been delivered from fibroid tumors and a few from malignant and incurable cancers. We have broken bones restored without surgical aid. We have seen God heal severe heart disease, tuberculosis and hernia, when it would have been death to walk forth as they did if Christ had not sustained.⁵⁶

Though Simpson did nothing to publicize the divine healing ministry and even made efforts to downplay it, news of healing quickly began to spread. In particular, the Friday afternoon meetings attracted thousands. This is not surprising in view of the frequency and power of the healings which took place. People from all walks of life were attracted to Simpson just as they were attracted to Jesus. Unfortunately, Simpson’s

⁵⁵ Simpson, *The Gospel of Healing*, 138.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 142.

healing ministry was also like that of Jesus in the sense that Simpson was rejected by the professional clergy just as Jesus was by the scribes and Pharisees. Niklaus describes the rejection which Simpson faced for the testimony about divine healing:

Ironically, his critics were willing to let him alone as long as he struggled along along sickly and weak. But when he became healthy, strong and energetic, they bitterly criticized his ministry and motives. Simpson suffered these public attacks in silence. He needed neither to defend his life-renewing experience nor seek approval from people.⁵⁷

Simpson was still the leader of the Alliance in 1906 when the Holy Spirit fell upon the meetings conducted by William Seymour at 312 Azusa St. in Los Angeles. There were many charismatic manifestations in the services. Visitors came from all over the world and many said that they spoke in tongues. The revival lasted from 1906-1909 and Pentecostal experiences and theology spread across the globe. The Christian and Missionary Alliance was much affected by the outpouring of the Spirit. Some Alliance pastors and church accepted the Pentecostal practices and others did not. Divine healing was already a part of Alliance practice and theology but speaking in tongues was something new. Simpson did not oppose speaking in tongues, but did not support the teaching that tongues was the necessary evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit. Niklaus notes that this decision was costly to the Alliance as numerous leaders and churches parted from the Alliance and affiliated with Pentecostal fellowships.⁵⁸

It seems clear that Simpson and the other Alliance leaders intended only to distance themselves from the doctrine of tongues as initial evidence. No statements were made repudiating charismatic gifts in general. In retrospect, however, it appears that this

⁵⁷ Niklaus, 42.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 115.

was a watershed event in the Alliance with unintended consequences. Whether directly related to the tongues controversy or not, the ministry of divine healing has definitely declined along with the exercise of other spiritual gifts. Even though the belief that Jesus is our Healer is still maintained as a core doctrine in the Alliance, it is rare to hear a testimony of divine healing actually taking place. It is the position of this paper that divine healing ministry should be restored in the practice of the Alliance. It was once widely practiced by early Alliance people and could be once again. Divine healing is the heritage of the Alliance. Similarly, other North American and European evangelicals would benefit by taking another look at divine healing.

At this point in history, North American and European churches have been left far behind in ministry effectiveness. One of the chief factors must certainly be the impotence of western churches regarding divine healing. Divine healing is widely practiced by the rest of the global church. Candy Gunther Brown comments on this situation:

Divine healing practices are an essential marker of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity as a global phenomenon. According to the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life's *Spirit and Power: A 10 Country survey of Pentecostals* (2006), more than a quarter—and in many countries two-thirds—of the world's 2 billion Christians identify themselves as Pentecostal or Charismatic. The Pew survey singles out divine healing—more so than any other factor, including speaking in tongues and financial prosperity—as distinguishing Pentecostals and Charismatics from other Christians.⁵⁹

This paper has demonstrated that the disciples of the Apostles believed in and powerfully ministered divine healing for centuries. Divine healing was probably the strongest factor in making evangelism so successful during that period. Constantine's establishment of a state church diminished many expressions of spirituality including healing, but divine healing never disappeared from the church. Divine healing ministry

⁵⁹ Candy Gunther Brown, *Global Pentecostal*, 3.

became stronger in the nineteenth century and exploded around the world after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Azusa Street. Today it is estimated that over 700 million Christians identify themselves as Pentecostals and consider divine healing an essential part of their faith. It is time for North American evangelicals to rediscover divine healing.

Theological Background

This section will demonstrate that there is a theological basis for the practice of divine healing ministry in general and for a project which will encourage divine healing ministry in a local church context. The argument for the practice of divine healing ministry is necessary because it is contrary to theologies in the North American and European churches which often oppose healing ministry: cessationism and antisupernaturalism, particularly the form of antisupernaturalism known as demythologization. Grudem defines a cessationist as “someone who thinks that certain miraculous spiritual gifts ceased long ago, when the apostles died and Scripture was complete.”⁶⁰ According to Erickson, demythologization is modernist rejection of Biblical miracle accounts and is associated with Rudolph Bultmann.⁶¹

In order to give perspective to the topic of divine healing ministry and to this ministry project, it should be noted that cessationists and antisupernaturalists are more common in North America and in Europe than throughout the rest of the world. Jon Ruthven comments: “In recent years the advancing front of charismatic growth has precipitated showers of polemical books and tracts, virtually all of these reiterating this

⁶⁰ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 1031.

⁶¹ Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1983), 60.

cessationist premise.”⁶² Ruthven then lists in a footnote an entire column of publications from publishers in North America and Europe. The absence of African, Asian and South American works is striking.

Cessationism and antsupernaturalism are not dominant in the global South (also termed the Majority World). The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life performed a survey in 2006 and determined that more than a quarter of the roughly two billion Christians worldwide said they were Pentecostal or charismatic.⁶³ Not surprisingly, there is a strong correspondence between identification as a charismatic and the practice of divine healing ministry. Candy Brown examined the survey and noted the following: “The Pew survey singles out divine healing—more so than any other factor, including speaking in tongues and financial prosperity—as distinguishing Pentecostals and Charismatics from other Christians.”⁶⁴

It appears that charismatic Christians who practice divine healing ministry will eventually dwarf the numbers of cessationist and antsupernaturalist Christians who reject divine healing. Harvey Cox describes the explosive growth of charismatic Christianity as a tidal wave and compares it to the Protestant Reformation:

Today, Christianity is living through a reformation that will prove to be even more basic and sweeping than the one that shook Europe during the sixteenth century....Further, the main bearers of this new reformation do not, by and large, represent the historic denominations that emerged from that sixteenth century turmoil. Rather, they are the children of a powerful spiritual movement that appeared in its present form only at the beginning of the twentieth century, namely, the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement.⁶⁵

⁶² Jon Ruthven, *On the Cessation*, 4.

⁶³ Luis Lugo et al, *Spirit and Power: A 10-Country Survey of Pentecostals* (Washington D.C.: Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, October, 2006)

⁶⁴ Candy Brown, *Global Pentecostal*, 3.

Despite the dynamic worldwide expansion of divine healing ministry and the charismatic theology that accompanies it, this project takes place in a local evangelical church in America. Cessationist thinking may be found among its members and in Christian organizations (radio stations, colleges, Bible colleges) which influence the local church. In this ministry context, cessationist thinking must be dealt with in order to demonstrate that miraculous spiritual gifts have not ceased and that divine healing ministry is still valid today. This paper will trace the origin and development of cessationist theology and, to a lesser extent, demythologization. Some contemporary cessationist authors will be examined. Finally, this study will consider the connection between the kingdom of God and the prominent role of divine healing ministry in the New Testament.

The theological concept of cessationism did not arise within a vacuum. Ruthven argues that Luther and the other Reformers were provoked by the corruption of the Catholic church. The Reformers held that true doctrine must be supported by Scripture alone and papal revelation was invalid.⁶⁶ The Catholic rebuttal was that miracles performed in the Catholic church proved their doctrine was true. Calvin's response was that no true miracles occurred after the New Testament era and that any claims of Catholic miracles were false and demonic.⁶⁷ As a result, having dismissed miracles in order to dispute the authority of the Catholic church, the Reformers made it theologically

⁶⁵ Harvey Cox, foreword to *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), xvii.

⁶⁶ Jon Ruthven, *What's Wrong with Protestant Theology?* (Tulsa, OK: Word & Spirit Press, 2013), 17.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

impossible for miracles to occur. It should not be surprising, then, that many Protestants continue to be cessationists to the present day. In a final ironic twist, Ruthven notes that miracles periodically happened among the early Protestants, but they could not be acknowledged or cessationism would be proved false.⁶⁸

While the Reformers' stand against ongoing miracles is the most relevant explanation for the resistance of contemporary North American believers to miracles and to divine healing ministry, it is not the earliest root of cessationism. Ruthven points out that, during the time of Jesus, the Jews themselves were aware that miracles and prophecy were not occurring among them. Their answer was to emphasize the study of Torah.⁶⁹ That reaction seems remarkably similar to the outlook of North American believers today. Miracles do not occur or cannot occur (on theological grounds) in most churches, and Bible study must suffice.

Cessationism also occurred in the early church. Ruthven gives a brief history of these individuals and groups. A Montanist prophetess claimed that there would be no more prophecy after her passing.⁷⁰ Chrysostom mentions miracles dozens of times, but the comments always advise believers not to seek them.⁷¹ Ambrosiaster held that miracles largely ceased after the apostles.⁷² Gregory the Great recorded numerous miracles, yet

⁶⁸ Ruthven, *What's Wrong*, 19.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 17.

commented that miracles were not necessary after the early church became strong.⁷³

Thomas Aquinas held that Christ and the apostles performed enough miracles to permanently validate the truth of the gospel. For this reason, Aquinas may be considered a supporter of the cessationist position. However, Aquinas conceded that miracles could recur if they were needed to confirm preaching.⁷⁴

At this point it would be appropriate to consider some examples of contemporary cessationist theologians. A text commonly considered important by cessationists is 1 Corinthians 13:8-13 since Paul discusses the eventual discontinuation of prophecy, tongues, and knowledge when *to teleion* (Greek for “the complete”) comes. Cessationists often hold that the other spiritual gifts mentioned by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12 ceased in the early church. However, there does seem to be a clear distinction made by cessationists that it is specifically prophecy, tongues, miracles, and healing gifts (among the gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12) which have ceased. For example, this study has not identified any cessationists who insist that the gift of administration has ceased. The key verses in this debate are 1 Corinthians 13:9-10: “For we know only in part and we prophesy only in part, but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end.” Cessationists and charismatics seem to agree that that “the partial” refers to knowledge and prophecy. But what does “the complete” refer to?

Richard Gaffin is one cessationist author who discusses 1 Corinthians 13:8-13 in an effort to make a case for cessation of prophecy. In *Perspectives on Pentecost* Gaffin advocates cessationism, but in a manner that departs from the strategy usually employed

⁷³ Ruthven, *What's Wrong*, 19.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

by cessationists in treating 1 Corinthians 13. Cessationists often argue that “the complete” refers to the completion of the New Testament canon or to the maturity of the church. Gaffin, however, concedes that *to teleion* refers to Christ’s return (the view taken by many charismatics) and goes so far as to dismiss the argument that *to teleion* has anything to do with the New Testament canon.⁷⁵

Gaffin’s understanding of 1 Corinthians 13 seems to be that Paul’s point is to show the importance of love rather than to address the relation of spiritual gifts to the time of Christ’s return. It is more accurate, however, to state that Paul’s desire is to emphasize the importance of love and the significance of Christ’s return as it relates to spiritual gifts. There is no reason to force the words of Paul into an either/or position when it is unwarranted. Grudem challenges Gaffin on this point:

The main point of this passage may well be that love lasts forever, but another point, and certainly an important one as well, is that verse 10 affirms not just that these imperfect gifts will cease sometime, but that they will cease “when the perfect comes.”⁷⁶

It is worth noting that Gaffin leaves room in his cessationist stance for divine healing:

There is nothing in Scripture, certainly nothing this study has brought to light, which would cause us to do anything else than maintain that healing, no matter how hopeless and terminal the prognosis medically, is a reality that has continued in the church’s history down to the present, and ought to be an expectation of God’s people today.⁷⁷

Gaffin does not explain how it is theologically consistent for “God’s people today” to have “expectation” of apparently miraculous healing for “hopeless and terminal” cases while simultaneously holding that the spiritual gifts of 1 Corinthians 12

⁷⁵ Richard Gaffin, Jr., *Perspectives on Pentecost* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1979), 109.

⁷⁶ Grudem, 1036.

⁷⁷ Gaffin, 114.

have ceased. In the same passage in *Perspectives on Pentecost* Gaffin offers this possible clue: “At the same time, however, the sovereign will and power of God today to heal the sick, particularly in response to prayer (see, e.g., James 5:14,15) ought to be acknowledged and insisted on.”⁷⁸ Apparently, Gaffin’s cessationism permits God to perform miracles of healing and permits the human element of prayer, even the human element of anointing with oil. Somehow all of this divine/human cooperation is acceptable as long as there is not an element of spiritual gifting involved. The logic of cessationism is difficult to follow.

Donald McDougall also discusses 1 Corinthians 13:8-12 in an effort to demonstrate cessation of spiritual gifts. McDougall also recognizes that the meaning of *teleion* (“the complete” NRSV or “perfection” NIV) in 1 Corinthians 13:10 is critical in determining whether Paul expects the exercise of spiritual gifts to be ongoing or not. McDougall points out that the two dominant interpretations of “perfection” in 1 Corinthians 13:10 are the closing of the New Testament canon (the typical cessationist view) and the return of Christ (the typical charismatic view).⁷⁹ McDougall rejects both views and argues that *to teleion* is best understood as a reference to “maturity.”⁸⁰ McDougall concludes by suggesting that the spiritual gifts came to an end at some vague point when the church became mature. McDougall makes no attempt to clarify the time when that occurred, but leaves the impression that it was early in the history of the church. It is disappointing that McDougall offers no definition of maturity, identifies

⁷⁸ Gaffin, 114.

⁷⁹ Donald McDougall, “Cessationism in 1 Cor 13:8-12,” *Masters Seminary Journal* (Fall 2003):200.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 212.

none of its characteristics, and gives no examples. Also missing is any explanation of how the later church became superior in maturity to the infant church.

If the flow of Paul's argument in 1 Corinthians 13:8-12 is to be taken seriously, the connection between verses 10 and 12 must be considered. In 13:10 Paul states that there is some future time when "the complete" will come. In verse 12 Paul again refers to a future time and states that one aspect of that time is that believers will see "face to face." The "face to face" reference must refer to the future return of Christ. It is highly likely, then, that the coming of "the complete" and the coming of Christ refer to the same event. The conclusion must be that the partial spiritual gifts of prophecy, tongues, and knowledge appropriately exercised prior to Christ's return will only cease when Christ returns. Wayne Grudem makes this argument in greater detail in *Systematic Theology*.⁸¹

In contrast to the cessationist position, Gordon Fee presents an excellent analysis of Paul's attitude toward spiritual gifts in the Corinthian church. This is helpful because cessationists sometimes portray miraculous gifts as contrary to love in Paul's thinking. In fact, Paul does not look down on spiritual gifts in general or on miraculous gifts in particular. Fee notes that Paul compliments the Corinthians in 1:7: "You are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ."⁸²

Fee is on the right track. Paul clearly states in 12:7 that the "manifestation of the Spirit" is for the "common good." Paul urges the exercise of spiritual gifts in 14:1: "Pursue love and strive for the spiritual gifts, and especially that you may prophesy." Again in 14:5 Paul encourages the use of spiritual gifts: "Now I would like all of you to

⁸¹ Grudem, 1033.

⁸² Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1987), 642.

speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy.” Obviously, the spiritual gifts are not a problem in themselves. They are gifts of God. The problem for the Corinthians seems to be that tongues are being overemphasized and exercised in a fashion that is unloving. Paul prefers that they emphasize prophecy in the corporate worship since tongues are strange to unbelievers: “If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your mind?” Fee summarizes Paul’s overall argument in this way:

One must not mistake this emphasis with a devaluation of the gifts themselves. The fact is that we are still in the present; and therefore in chap. 14 Paul will go on not only to correct an imbalance with regard to the gifts, but to urge their proper use. Pursue love (14:1), he says, because that alone is forever (13:8, 13); but that also means that in the present you should eagerly desire manifestations of the Spirit that build up the community (14:1-5).⁸³

As far as the cessation of spiritual gifts is concerned, Fee argues that *to teleion* in 1 Corinthians 13:10 “has to do with the Eschaton itself, not some form of perfection in the present age....At the coming of Christ, the final purpose of God’s saving work in Christ will have been reached; at that point those gifts now necessary for the building up of the church in the present age will disappear, because the complete will have come.”⁸⁴

Cessationist believers sometimes object that modern ministries of healing are not as powerful as those represented in the New Testament. In response, Grudem offers several thoughts. First, the gospels record in several places that Jesus healed large numbers of the afflicted. For example, Matthew 4:23 states, “Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.” It is unlikely that all of the

⁸³ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 642.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 646.

afflicted were blind, deaf, paralyzed or terminally ill. Among the afflicted there must have been many cases of less severe problems. For understandable reasons, the gospel writers do not list the lesser conditions, yet they still would be cases of Jesus' healing ministry. If an afflicted person is delivered of a lesser disease today, it is possible that a healing gift was involved. Similarly, Jesus healed all of the sick. If a modern healing ministry finds that less than half of the efforts result in healing, is that proof that a gift of the Holy Spirit is not involved? Thousands of people were converted under Peter's preaching on the Day of Pentecost. If the preaching of a modern evangelist results in a handful of conversions, does that mean that there is no gift of evangelism in operation? Grudem's argument is persuasive.⁸⁵

The line of reasoning above proceeds from an initial concession that modern healing ministries do not, in fact, compare with the power of the healing miracles of Jesus and the apostles. This may reveal the limited experience of Gaffin and Grudem. In the 2006 survey of Pentecostals in ten nations which was referred to at the beginning of this chapter, at least 500 million Christians worldwide identify themselves as Pentecostals or charismatics. Candy Brown notes that in every country surveyed, a majority of the Pentecostals/charismatics reported experiencing or witnessing divine healing.⁸⁶ While it is true that these healings were self-reported and might be regarded as unverified by cessationists, the numerical extent of healing is still very large. At the very least, Christians around the world reported millions of healings. Regarding Gaffin's criticism that individual healings today do not show "the same magnitude of unambiguous and

⁸⁵ Grudem, 1045.

⁸⁶ Brown, *Global Pentecostal*, 3.

sovereign power displayed in the healing miracles of Jesus and the apostles,” the reader should consult volume two of *Miracles* by Craig Keener. Keener has compiled testimonies from India, Indonesia, South Korea, China, Africa, and Latin America. The accounts are similar to the most dramatic healings in the New Testament including blindness, deafness, incurable cancer and more.

The worldviews of today’s North American and European believers, including those in this local church project, are not only formed by Reformation cessationist theology constructed to combat abuses in the Catholic church. In *Theology with Spirit*, Lederle discusses the influence of secular thought in the modern era which Lederle identifies as having started around the time of the French Revolution in 1789. The modern era ushered in scientific inquiry which transformed knowledge. Lederle says, “Scientists discovered that illnesses were caused by germs, not by witches. All the natural laws of the universe were fixed and clear, operating consistently and universally, like the law of gravity.”⁸⁷

Lederle explains that the modern worldview emphasized the power of human reason and science. Modernists could conceive of God as being transcendent, but gradually doubted the possibility of God being immanent. Eventually modernists developed a theistic view of God as a watchmaker who wound up creation and allowed it to wind down without divine intervention. According to this view, belief in miracles was no longer reasonable. Since the Bible was full of accounts of the miraculous, the Bible itself became suspect. The miracle-working God of the Bible could not be reconciled with apparent laws of nature. Lederle elaborates on the effect of modernism on theology:

⁸⁷ Henry Lederle, *Theology with Spirit* (Tulsa, OK: Word & Spirit Press, 2010), 18.

gradually doubted the possibility of God being immanent. Eventually modernists developed a theistic view of God as a watchmaker who wound up creation and allowed it to wind down without divine intervention. According to this view, belief in miracles was no longer reasonable. Since the Bible was full of accounts of the miraculous, the Bible itself became suspect. The miracle-working God of the Bible could not be reconciled with apparent laws of nature. Lederle elaborates on the effect of modernism on theology:

The rational, scientific worldview led to the large-scale reinterpretation and elimination of the supernatural dimension from the Christian gospel. Miracles of healing were explained away as spontaneous remissions or having been based on incorrect diagnoses. Those raised from the dead had only been temporarily comatose.⁸⁸

The advent of modernism resulted in a new branch of theologians who rejected the possibility of biblical miracles as well as later miracle accounts. Rudolph Bultmann would be the best known example. Erickson states that Bultmann's 1941 *New Testament and Mythology* began the movement toward demythologization.⁸⁹ Bultmann and his peers differed from Reformation cessationists, however. Reformation theologians accepted the miracle accounts of the Bible and rejected any subsequent miracle accounts because they were used by Catholicism to validate Catholic theology. Bultmann went much further by rejecting all the biblical miracle accounts as well.⁹⁰

Protestants in North America may have been influenced by both Reformation cessationist theology and by the demythologizing theology of Bultmann and others. It is no wonder that acceptance of miracles in general and of divine healing in particular might

⁸⁸ Lederle, 23.

⁸⁹ Erickson, 60

⁹⁰ Ibid., 23.

recall hearing any doubts expressed about miracles in the Bible, but there is much less expectation that God could accomplish healing through average Christians today.

If spiritual gifts have not ceased, as the paper contends, then divine healing should still be manifested in the body of Christ today. What is an appropriate theology for the ongoing ministry of miraculous gifts including healing? Clark holds that the modern resistance to healing stems from the time of Augustine who had what Clark terms a blueprint worldview. Clark defines the blueprint worldview as “an understanding that everything in life happens due to the predetermined will of God.”⁹¹ Clark believes that the blueprint worldview is not a biblical theology and that the early church did not teach such a view. Instead, the early church taught a warfare worldview in which Christ and the believers were at war against evil. One manifestation of evil was sickness and believers understood that Jesus opposed and defeated sickness and that Jesus empowered the church to do the same through the power of the Holy Spirit.⁹²

This warfare outlook is manifest in Acts 10:37-38 when Peter speaks to the household of Cornelius and summarizes the ministry of Jesus: “You know what has happened throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached—how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.”

⁹¹ Johnson and Clark, *The Essential Guide to Healing*, 96.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 95.

Ruthven holds that a proper biblical theology recognizes the importance of the New Testament concept of the kingdom of God.⁹³ Jesus closely associated the kingdom of God with healing and deliverance in Matthew 12:28: “But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.” Paul likewise connects the kingdom of God with power in 1 Corinthians 4:20: “For the kingdom of God depends not on talk but on power.” These passages are typical of the New Testament representation of the kingdom of God as something that is manifested in healing and deliverance. Ruthven points to additional supporting scriptures: Matthew 4:23; 9:35; 10:7-8; Luke 4:40-43; 8:1-2; 9:2, 11; 10:9, 11; John 3:5-6; Acts 8:12-13; Romans 14:17.⁹⁴

Matthew 4:23 and 9:35 are highly significant because these passages are summaries of the ministry of Jesus. These two passages describe what the ministry of Jesus looked like, not on some unusual occasion, but on a typical day. Matthew 4:23 reports: “Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.” Matthew 9:35 records: “Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness.” An unbiased reader of Matthew’s gospel would easily grasp that the kingdom of God and the ministry of divine healing go hand in hand.

Acts 8:12-13 reveals that the followers of Jesus displayed the kingdom of God through miracles and healing just as Jesus had done earlier. This passage describes the

⁹³ Ruthven, *What’s Wrong*, 150.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 151.

ministry of Philip, a deacon in the early church: “But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.”

Modern theologians have not been totally unaware of the close connection between the kingdom and healing ministry in the New Testament. C.H. Dodd equates the kingdom of God with the person of Jesus and sees Jesus’ healing and deliverance ministry as a blow to the kingdom of Satan.⁹⁵ Beasley-Murray also sees the miracles of Jesus as an expression of the kingdom.⁹⁶ These are definitely minority views among European and North American theologians. In any case, most theologians who consider the miracles of Jesus to be signs of the kingdom do not consider such signs to have any relevance to the church today.

Contemporary practitioners of divine healing ministry may not be significant voices in the scholarly world of academia, but such individuals often have a clearer understanding of the high priority of healing and deliverance in Jesus’ concept of the kingdom of God. Such practitioners also grasp the necessity for the church to continually demonstrate the kingdom of God with divine healing ministry just as Jesus did. Describing the church in Argentina, Matthew Marostica says that divine healing is “the primary tool for evangelizing and church growth.”⁹⁷ Marostica explains the practical

⁹⁵ C.C. Caragounis, “Kingdom of God,” in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, ed. Joel B. Green (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 421.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 422.

⁹⁷ Matthew Marostica, “Learning from the Master: Carlos Annacondia and the Standardization of Pentecostal Practices in and beyond Argentina,” in *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing*, ed. Candy Brown (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), 207.

theology of Carlos Annacondia, an Argentine evangelist whose ministry has a strong emphasis on divine healing ministry including deliverance from demonic forces: “Carlos Annacondia’s message was, and is, simple: God and the devil exist and are in permanent battle with each other. By accepting Christ, individuals gain access to divine power to overcome Satan.”⁹⁸

Annacondia’s warfare theology and practice of divine healing would fit smoothly into the environment of the early church. Francis MacNutt confirms the similarity of approach:

Much as it may offend our modern sensibilities, the approach to religion in the early church was very simple. Just as Jesus attracted crowds by his miracles and sent his disciples out two by two to heal and cast out evil spirits, so, too, the early Christians emphasized healing and exorcism as the chief instrument of conversion. The earliest Christian writers all say this.⁹⁹

In conclusion, the New Testament does not teach that there was to be a cessation of healing or other miraculous spiritual gifts after the formation of the canon or at some vague point of maturity in the church. In particular, 1 Corinthians 13 teaches that such gifts will only subside when Christ returns. What the New Testament does teach is a warfare theology in which Christ and the believers are at war against evil and a major manifestation of evil is sickness. The gospel writers directly connect proclamation of the kingdom of God with healing and deliverance. Contrary to the claims of cessationists, there is abundant evidence that divine healing is still in operation. Millions of people around the world have testified to receiving healing or witnessing it. Many contemporary accounts of divine healing are as powerful as anything recorded in scripture. It is time

⁹⁸ Marostica, 213.

⁹⁹ MacNutt, *Healing*, 46.

for North American and European churches to participate in divine healing ministry. For these reasons, there is justification for a project to encourage divine healing ministry in the local church context.

CHAPTER FOUR

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The previous chapter demonstrated that there are many accounts of divine healing ministry in the Bible and that such ministry was intended to be an ongoing practice. The researcher's investigation has also shown that divine healing ministry occurred throughout church history, although it was often not widespread until the early twentieth century. Since the early twentieth century, the number of charismatic believers has exploded. Based on current trends, Philip Jenkins predicts that the number of charismatic believers will pass the one billion mark before 2050.¹ Candy Gunther Brown predicts that the influence of Christians in the Global South upon North American Christians will result in divine healing becoming more accepted in the U.S.² It appears to the researcher also that, in addition to expanding divine healing ministry across the globe, God is in the process of restoring the ministry of divine healing to the North American church. It is of particular concern to the researcher that divine healing ministry be strengthened at Canal Fulton Christian Fellowship (CFCF) where the researcher serves as senior pastor.

¹ Jenkins, *The Next Christendom*, 10.

² Candy Gunther Brown, "Pentecostalism and the Globalization of Illness and Healing," in *Global Pentecostal and Charismatic Healing*, ed. Candy Brown (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3.

This chapter describes the problem, the hypothesis of the researcher, participants in the study, social constructivist worldview, researcher practices in qualitative approach, data collection and recording, and data analysis. Project reliability and validity are discussed.

The Problem

The problem which led to this research project is the unfamiliarity of many CFCF people with divine healing ministry, and hesitancy to engage in it. By divine healing ministry, the researcher specifically means prayer with laying on of hands as opposed to prayer for a sick individual who is not in the same location as the minister. The neglect of divine healing ministry is particularly inappropriate at CFCF since such ministry is one of the official doctrines emphasized by the Christian and Missionary Alliance, the denomination of which CFCF is a part. The core doctrine of the C&MA is Jesus our Savior, Jesus our Sanctifier, Jesus our Healer, and Jesus our Coming King. Since divine healing is a central doctrine of the C&MA, it is appropriate for CFCF people to become practitioners. This situation provided an opportunity for the researcher to introduce training in divine healing ministry that would acquaint participants at CFCF with the biblical foundation of divine healing and that will train participants in its practice. A training course could be one step in restoring such ministry. If effective, such a course could be beneficial in other churches of the Christian and Missionary Alliance and in other fellowships.

The Hypothesis

The researcher's hypothesis is that a seven-week training course in divine healing ministry would cause participants to pray for the sick more often and that they would be better equipped to do so. Teaching materials will be drawn from the resources of Global Awakening.

Participants

The expectation of the researcher is that CFCF participants in the study would not have much previous knowledge or experience with divine healing ministry. A typical CFCF member would fit this profile. However, the level of prior knowledge and experience in the participant group depended upon who elected to be part of the training course. The researcher made no attempt to control participation; it was entirely voluntary. Announcements were made in the Sunday morning service about the training course. There were some members of CFCF who had significant interest in healing and experience in healing ministry. It was possible that the training course would attract those who already had relatively greater interest and knowledge in this area.

Philosophical Worldview

One approach to research which influenced this project was the social constructivist worldview. Creswell describes the outlook of social constructivism this way:

Social constructivists hold assumptions that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. Individuals develop subjective meanings of their experiences—meanings directed toward certain objects or things. These meanings are varied and multiple, leading the researcher to look for the

complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas.³

The researcher anticipated that the participants would develop subjective meanings of their experiences. This researcher desired to allow for a complexity of views and to encourage those views to be expressed. It was anticipated that participant views would probably not fit into neat categories. The significance and value of those views would be valid nonetheless.

Qualitative Approaches

The research project was implemented with a small number of participants in the local church context of Canal Fulton Christian Fellowship. Fewer than twenty individuals were expected to participate. The limited number of participants enabled the researcher to use the qualitative approach of case studies. The participants in the divine healing course would have repeated opportunities to reflect on their experiences. This in-depth exploration was a benefit of the case study approach. The experience of each individual was regarded as significant by the researcher. The small number of participants also enabled the researcher to use the qualitative approach of narrative research. The focus was not on collecting numerical data although some numerical data was collected. Instead, the focus was on capturing the experience of the participants through writing and discussion. Journal writing and interviews were used to draw out personal views.

³ John Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 2008), 3.

Researcher Practices in Qualitative Approach

Creswell describes appropriate researcher practices when using the qualitative approach.⁴ First, according to Creswell, the researcher focuses on a single concept or phenomenon. In this project, the researcher investigated the single concept of divine healing ministry by offering a training course to a small group of participants at Canal Fulton Christian Fellowship. Second, Creswell states that the qualitative approach permits the researcher to bring personal values into the study. In this project, the researcher was an advocate of divine healing ministry. The researcher did not claim to be neutral toward healing. The basic intention of the training course was to encourage divine healing ministry at CFCF. Third, according to Creswell, the researcher in a qualitative approach collects participant meanings. In this project, the researcher accomplished this step by using questionnaires (before and after the training course), journals, and interviews. Fourth, Creswell says that another practice of the researcher in qualitative approach is to study the context of participants. In this project, the context was a small group of participants at Canal Fulton Christian Fellowship. As senior pastor of this local church, the researcher had ample opportunity to consider the context. Fifth, according to Creswell, the researcher makes interpretations of the data. In this project, the researcher performed this step by evaluating the questionnaires, journals, and interviews. Sixth, Creswell states that the researcher creates an agenda for change and collaborates with the participants. In this project, the researcher worked with participants to discover if the divine healing training course enabled them to pray for the sick more often and to be better equipped to do so.

⁴ Creswell, 17.

Data Collection and Recording Procedures

Canal Fulton Christian Fellowship in Canal Fulton, Ohio was the site of the training course in divine healing ministry. Weekly instruction took place there. Participants were encouraged to pray for the sick in the locations of their daily life: home, work, neighborhood, school, and social gathering places. Data collection was accomplished through these methods: questionnaires before and after the course, participant journals, and participant discussions.

Participants completed a questionnaire during the first session of the training course. It consisted mostly of open-ended questions in order to encourage detailed responses regarding prior experience with divine healing ministry. A second questionnaire was completed at the close of the training course. Participants kept a journal during the training course in order to record healing experiences and reflections. The researcher interviewed the participants in group format to encourage interaction among the participants about their experiences during the training course. During these discussions the researcher recorded responses by longhand.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The researcher studied the data generated by the questionnaires, journals and interviews in order to look for themes. The researcher desired to answer some basic questions. As a result of the training course, did participants pray for the sick more frequently? If so, why? If not, why not? As a result of the training course, did participants feel better equipped to pray for the sick? As a result of the training course, did participants have a more positive attitude toward divine healing ministry? Apart from

these questions, what did the participants experience? Would the participants recommend the course to others? How might the training be more helpful?

Validity of the study was addressed by methodological triangulation and by sharing results with the participants for their assessment. The researcher invited the context associates to evaluate the findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

FIELD EXPERIENCE

Introduction

The research project was designed to create a training course in divine healing ministry for members of Canal Fulton Christian Fellowship that would make them more effective in divine healing ministry. The experiment tested the hypothesis that a seven-week training course would enable participants to pray for the sick more often and that they would be better equipped to do so. Prior to the training course, announcements were made in Sunday morning service to invite people to attend. The class began on April 9, 2014 and continued each Wednesday evening for about ninety minutes per class.

Training Event-Week One

In the first class the researcher explained that the class was part of the researcher's Doctor of Ministry program at United Theological Seminary. All participants were connected to Canal Fulton Christian Fellowship though not all were members. The participants were given notebooks and encouraged to record their thoughts about the course in these journals. Each person was given a pre-course survey to complete. The researcher explained that a post-course survey would be given later to determine the effectiveness of the training.

The session began with a section of the video *Finger of God*¹ in which Jason Westerfield meets strangers on the campus of Yale University and asks if they have any condition which might benefit from healing prayer. Jason meets a middle-aged woman on disability who invites him to pray. Jason prays for problems in her breathing, knee, sinus, and back. Jason prays for these specific conditions without asking the woman to identify her illnesses. The woman reports that she experienced relief in these areas and expresses surprise that Jason knew what to pray for. Next Jason prays for a young man whose leg was struck by a car. The man is using crutches. After prayer the young man reports that he is free from pain and he is able to walk without crutches. The researcher used this video as an example of divine healing ministry because it did not correspond to popular stereotypes about such ministry. For example, healing ministry is often pictured as something that only a few specially gifted ministers (wearing expensive suits) do in large gatherings. Jason Westerfield, on the other hand, appears to be an outwardly unremarkable young man (wearing shorts) ministering alone on a college campus. Mr. Westerfield appeared to the researcher to represent an everyman figure, someone with whom participants in the healing class might identify.

Participant Discussion

Participant twelve pointed out Jason's boldness to pray for strangers in a public place. Jason boldly asked the woman if she wanted to be healed. Participant twelve said it is easier to pray for healing among Christians than it is to do so in public. This participant noted that the woman expressed joy as a result of healing.

¹ *Finger of God*, DVD-ROM (Elgin, IL: Wanderlust Productions, 2007).

Participant thirteen said that Jason's boldness came from the Holy Spirit and that his knowledge of the woman's health problems came from words of knowledge. This participant said that one sign of a word of knowledge is feeling pain and knowing there is nothing wrong with one's own body in that area. Participant thirteen noted there was no word of knowledge involved in Jason's prayer for the young man with the injured leg.

Participant six pointed out that the two people for whom Jason prayed were willing to receive ministry. That is not always the case. Sometimes people are reluctant to receive divine healing prayer.

Participant fourteen noted that there was faith shown by Jason Westerfield. Jason went to the Yale campus expecting God to heal people.

Participant four expressed the desire to have faith like Jason's as long as there was confidence that God wanted him to pray for a specific person.

Participant ten raised the issue of faith in healing and posed this question: "Is it necessary for the person receiving prayer to have faith in order to be healed?" This participant said a recent small group discussion among friends led to the conclusion that it may be sufficient for the person praying to have faith.

Participant twelve said it was significant that the woman in the video seemed to be a believer. This person said that healing is referred to in the Bible as "the children's bread."

The researcher did a brief teaching about Jesus commissioning the twelve apostles in Matthew 10. In Matthew 10:8 Jesus commands the twelve to "cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons." Does this command apply to today's believers also, or was it limited to the apostles? The researcher turned to Matthew 28 and read the

Great Commission passage in which Jesus commands the eleven to teach their disciples “everything that I have commanded you.” This would plainly include Jesus’ directions to heal the sick.

Participant thirteen noted that Mark 16:18 predicts that the followers of Jesus will “lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover.”

Participant six quoted from John 14:12 in which Jesus says, “Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father.” This participant suggested that it is God’s plan that today’s Christians should practice divine healing ministry.

The researcher asked if any of the participants desired healing prayer. One person received prayer for knee pain. This individual was uncertain if there was improvement and said testing out the knee after class would be necessary. Another person received prayer for back pain. This individual said the back area felt “different” afterward and had difficulty describing the sensation. Another received prayer for back pain and expressed that there was substantial relief afterward. This person noted that the pain seemed to stop when someone prayed that he would be able to release resentment.

Later that week a member of Canal Fulton Christian Fellowship requested prayer for back pain. The person reported pain of nine on a scale of ten in the neck and left shoulder. The researcher and two church members (not in the training class) prayed. After prayer the individual reported the pain was reduced to about 5. The researcher offered further prayer later in the week, if the pain was still present.

Researcher Journal Reflections

The researcher was grateful that the first training session was reasonably well attended. There had been some anxiety that few people would participate for lack of interest or for lack of being comfortable. The researcher does not consider CFCF to be a charismatic church. In the researcher's estimation, most CFCF members are not familiar with the spiritual gift of healing. In the past, those who do believe that divine healing ministry is a legitimate activity today have seemed to the researcher to be comfortable with receiving prayer from pastors and elders, but reticent about laying their own hands on others. This is one of the main reasons the researcher chose the initial video. Jason Westerfield (the minister of divine healing in the video) was not pretentious at all. Mr. Westerfield approached people in a friendly way and spoke to them in a relaxed manner. The interactions of Mr. Westerfield with others took place on a college campus rather than an organized meeting where people might feel more self-conscious.

The researcher wanted participants in the training course to be able to relate to the person being offered as a model of divine healing ministry. In the experience of the researcher, ministers of divine healing in a large group setting sometimes behave in an affected manner that seems to highlight their difference from other people rather than their similarity. This kind of affectation creates the illusion that only special people can pray for the sick. Such posturing recalls the pre-Reformation role of the priest in which the priest had a special connection with God and was singularly qualified to minister spiritual gifts. By contrast, the Reformation introduced the biblical concept of the priesthood of believers in which an average Christian receives spiritual gifts from God and ministers them.

None of the participants rejected the concept that the command of Jesus to heal the sick (Matthew 10:8) was just as applicable to believers today as it was to the twelve disciples who originally received the charge. From prior conversations, the researcher suspects that there may have been several individuals in the training course who may not have had interest in the topic, but were motivated to help the pastor by participating in the project. If this be the case, the researcher is grateful for the support. One participant who suffers from serious illness specifically asked not to be prayed for during the training course. The researcher was happy to comply with the request as there is not benefit from embarrassing any of the participants. The researcher believed this could hinder healing by injecting fear and self-consciousness into the person who receives prayer. Praying for the sick should take place in an atmosphere of love in which the minister does not only look out for his own interests but also for the interests of others.

The researcher's original intention was to teach divine healing concepts in the training course in a lecture format. Someone recommended that it would be better to use video, if available, because young people relate well to video and prefer it to a lecture style. The researcher has become quite conscious of being dated in communication style and did not want to hinder the effectiveness of the training by using a medium that the participants would find boring. So, the researcher will use video as much as possible during this training course.

The researcher was glad that several people requested prayer for healing after the video and discussion. Hands-on experience is certainly an excellent form of learning since all of the senses are involved. Educators insist that people remember more of what they do than of what they read or see. Among the three participants who received prayer,

only one reported substantial improvement. In the experience of the researcher, this is not unusual in a North American setting. Randy Clark (one of the most prominent ministers of divine healing) has said that only half of the people who receive prayer typically experience improvement. On Sunday mornings the researcher encouraged those with health problems to visit the training course so that participants would have increased opportunity to pray for the sick.

Training Event-Week Two

The participants watched a video in which The Five Step Prayer Model is taught by Tom Jones of Global Awakening. Jones recorded this lecture at a conference (Kingdom Foundations: A School of Healing and Impartation) in Mechanicsburg, PA in the fall of 2013.² The model consists of the following steps: Interview, Prayer Selection, Prayer Ministry (the actual laying on of hands), Re-interview, and Post Prayer Suggestions. The participants made numerous comments in response to the video.

Participant Discussion

Participant fifteen said, "I use different prayers depending on the person. I'm praying for a couple people and their needs are not physical but emotional."

Participant ten said, "The speaker mentioned an attitude of gratitude (Tom Jones emphasized being grateful for everything God does). I really like that. There's no guarantee that the person will be healed, but they should feel loved." Participant ten compared the learning of the Five Step Prayer Model to other skills: "We might stumble

² *Kingdom Foundations: A School of Healing and Impartation*, DVD-ROM (Mechanicsburg, PA: Global Awakening, 2012, disc 1.

as we try to use the model.” This participant also commented that the setting for healing prayer matters: “So much of this is creating an environment where things can happen. For example, minimize distractions.”

Participant thirteen stated that it was important to be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit: “You don’t have a preconceived idea. Let the Holy Spirit lead you.”

Participant eight agreed: “Even though Tom Jones uses this model, he is depending on the Holy Spirit.”

Participant four said he was struck by the truth of this statement by Tom Jones: “If you want to see more people healed, you have to pray for more people.”

Later that week a CFCF member said that neck and shoulder pain was almost gone as a result of prayer received the week before. Since some pain remained, the researcher and two others prayed again.

Journal Writing

Participant sixteen recorded this:

PRAY! They can’t be healed if you don’t pray for them. More opportunity = more results.” This participant went on to write the Five Step Prayer Model in her own words:

INTERVIEW. Always ask. Listen to the person with one ear, and the Holy Spirit with the other ear. What is the root? Natural sources, emotional causes, physical issues, sin, the demonic. Pray for the root, not the symptoms. If demonic, renounce demonic afflictions.

PRAYER SELECTION. Petition- to release the gift of healing, directed toward God. Command- directed at the area of the body or disease. Prayer of faith- declare that he is healed in the name of Jesus. Make sure you are following where God is leading.

PRAYER MINISTRY. Prayer of agreement. Don't be a distraction of the Holy Spirit. Nothing can be received. Don't touch if it will be distracting. Don't be long. Engage, then ask if anything has happened. Whatever God does, thank Him. Attitude of gratitude. If pain gets worse or moves, it's an afflicting spirit. Must be ok with not knowing what's going on or shy. Pray until... they are healed, nothing's happening, they have to go. As long as the setting permits it, keep praying.

POST-PRAYER SUGGESTIONS. Give scripture to encourage. They have authority over the pain if it arises again. NEVER tell them it was their fault that they wouldn't get healed. Don't guarantee healing, but make sure they leave feeling loved. Can't receive healing if they feel condemned.

CREATE. Create an environment where this can work.

Researcher Journal Reflections

The researcher was very glad for Tom Jones to emphasize that the minister of divine healing should never blame lack of recovery on the inadequate faith of the sick person. However, it is plain in the ministry of Jesus that he remarked multiple times that faith was a factor for those who received healing. For example, Mark 2:5 records that Jesus commented on the faith of the four friends who brought a paralyzed man to the Savior. Mark 5 records that the woman suffering from chronic bleeding was convinced that healing would come merely by touching the garment of Jesus. As far as the researcher is aware, this event recorded in Mark 5 is the first occasion in the healing ministry of Jesus in which the sick individual initiated the healing by touching Jesus without invitation. The woman seemed to have discerned that it was not necessary for Jesus to initiate the healing or to place his hands upon the sick individual. In Mark 5:34 Jesus declares, "Daughter, your faith has healed you." Mark 6 records that Jesus was amazed at the lack of faith among the people in Nazareth.

Clearly, faith is an element in divine healing. Nevertheless, every person who came to Jesus for healing received what they came for. The scriptures do not record a single instance where the sick person left with the illness after encountering Jesus. Further, there is the account in Acts 5 where crowds brought the sick to the apostles. Acts 5:16 reports that all of them were healed. It appears that the determination to approach Jesus (or the apostles) for healing indicated that sufficient faith was present in the one coming for ministry. Therefore, when prayer for healing does not result in healing today, it may be that the lack is to be found in the person or persons praying. This explanation is just as possible as the idea that the faith of the sick person is inadequate. The researcher believes that Jones is correct to caution those who would rebuke the sick person.

So why don't more American and European Christians exercise divine healing ministry and lay hands on the sick? Participant four was struck by the statement of Tom Jones that many more sick people would recover if Christians would simply pray for them. The researcher was much affected by that statement as well. It may be that one of the reasons for the hesitancy of many to engage in healing ministry is the success rate, or perhaps one should say the lack of success rate. The researcher is not aware of any minister of divine healing who claims to see everyone healed. Rather, it is typical in healing meetings for some to be healed and for others to be unchanged. Divine healing ministry often contains an element of disappointment both for the person receiving and for the person praying. The researcher believes that some believers avoid laying hands on the sick because they simply don't want to deal with failure. It is disappointing for the sick individual to state that the condition is still present. That is hard to hear for a person with a heart of compassion. The person praying wanted to help but there is nothing to

celebrate. Also, a failure in the past can produce a negative expectation in the mind of the person who is considering to offer prayer for someone. Healing prayer didn't seem to have any effect last time, why take a chance this time? Jones did respond to this excuse by encouraging the listeners to be willing to take risks.

Another possibility for reticence in offering divine healing ministry is that people may refuse to be prayed for. In the experience of the researcher, most people are receptive to divine healing prayer, even in public when one encounters a stranger with an obvious need. Nevertheless, a believer may imagine having to experience the rejection of others and be reluctant to face it. Of course, some people do refuse healing prayer and it is inevitable that this will happen to everyone who prays for the sick regularly. A third reason is that a believer may accept divine healing ministry in theory but simply lack confidence in doing it. If one has not been raised in a Pentecostal/charismatic church culture, it may be that there have been few opportunities to observe laying on of hands. This is, in fact, the case at CFCF. Very few CFCF members were raised in Pentecostal/charismatic churches. Many unfamiliar things can feel intimidating unless one has had substantial exposure. For many people, it is helpful to gain experience by joining with more seasoned healing prayer ministers. Confidence grows with experience.

Training Event-Week Three

The researcher presented a video recording of Tom Jones of Global Awakening teaching on the topic Foundation of Healing.³ This video was recorded at a conference in Mechanicsburg, PA in the fall of 2013: Kingdom Foundations: A School of Healing and

³ *Kingdom Foundations: A School of Healing and Impartation*, DVD-ROM (Mechanicsburg, PA: Global Awakening, 2012), disc 7.

Impartation. The emphasis of the lecture was not on technique since divine healing ministry, according to Jones, is not an equation to be solved. Healing ministry is the overflow of the relationship of the believer with the Lord Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. As the believer grows in intimacy with Jesus, the possibilities of healing increase. This is not to suggest that divine healing is an achievement of the person ministering. Rather, divine healing is a ministry of grace in which the minister of healing depends upon the guidance of the Father and the gifts given by the Holy Spirit (see 1 Corinthians 12:9). In view of this perspective, Jones explained the importance of several aspects of divine healing ministry. Below the researcher has summarized some major points of the teaching of Jones:

The divine healing minister should live with an attitude of expectancy, of faith, being diligent in seeking the Lord. God may challenge the divine healing minister in various ways to determine the level of commitment. One must be willing to pay the price. Do not assume that God cannot move in one's local church unless an outside speaker or healing minister comes to visit. Be prepared to be the one God uses to minister healing to those in need. Be open to things you do not understand. Historically, outpourings of the Holy Spirit have often been accompanied by physical manifestations which resulted in opposition by other Christians. This was true of George Whitefield, John Wesley, The Cane Ridge Revival, Toronto, and other revivals.

Participant Discussion

Participant six admitted that there have been times in life when having God's presence has not been a priority. The person expressed regret, but wanted to be honest with the group.

Participant sixteen admitted the same spiritual indifference and posed the question: "Then, what's it going to take?" The researcher understood this question to mean that each believer must consider what will motivate us to make pursuit of God the top priority.

Participant six said that God will respond to us as we move in his direction.

Participant seventeen admired the candor of Tom Jones. Jones was an experienced and prominent pastor but confessed to being spiritually empty at one point.

Participant four was struck by Jones's account of feeding starving people in Africa. By contrast most Americans do not have much experience with physical hunger and are rich compared to Africans. This participant recalled Jesus' words: "It's incredibly hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." Participant 4 said, "I want to break through that!"

Participant one said, "I should have expectancy! At home. At church."

Journal Writing

Participant sixteen recorded these thoughts in response to the message by Tom Jones. Some of the material is simply rephrasing of Jones's message and some is original

reflection on the message. The researcher has included the thoughts verbatim as an example of a participant receiving concepts of healing ministry through one's own lens:

Our level of hunger influences how hard we press into God. Lean in. Accepting Jesus isn't the whole package. There are more realms to God than what we have experienced. We need to be willing to pay any price to see a fresh move of God. Revival doesn't have to look a certain way. God isn't in our "box." He enjoys getting out of our box. Make having his presence a priority. Make room for his presence. Change the atmosphere when you walk into a room with his presence. Set the temperature of the room! Live with an attitude of expectancy. Catch and create the next wave. Allow God to touch you first. Let it begin with us. Don't depend on speakers or others. You may need more than one touch. Being on the edge of what God is doing will bring controversy. Be open to the things you don't understand. Manifestations. Correction will need to be brought when learning to discern what's from God and what's not of God. "The very thing you despise is the sign that God has given you to prove his promise to you." (Researcher's note: This was a word from the Lord to Tom Jones when he was offended by various manifestations in revival meetings.) We fit into God's world; he doesn't fit into ours. Do we make him the top priority daily?

Participant eleven wrote: "God responds to our hunger for him. Make his presence a priority. Make room for his presence in our private lives. Live in an attitude of expectancy. Allow God to touch you first as often as needed. Hunger is a force that makes us do things we would not naturally do. Be open to the things you do not understand."

Participant one wrote: "How much do we want God? How much is our level of hunger for God? Make having his presence a priority. Make room for his presence in our private lives. Attitude of expectancy. Set the temperature—take His Spirit with you. Tell God that you want Him to touch you first. You may need more than one touch. Be open to things we don't understand. How do we make God's presence a priority for us?"

Participant six wrote: “If we’re not hungry for God we won’t press in to Him. Did Jesus recognize in Zacchaeus a hunger for more of Him that he climbed a tree?”

Participant seven wrote: “Our level of hunger dictates/influences how hard we press in to God. How desperate are we? How hungry are we? We need to be willing to pay any price to see a fresh move of God. It doesn’t matter what it looks like as long as it is a fresh move of God. God is not in our box.”

Participant four wrote: “How hungry are we? How much do we want Him? Our level of hunger will influence our willingness to press God for more. How desperate and hungry are you? People who are starving will go to any length to get food. We play a big part in how much we receive from God. Don’t ever assume that you’ve experienced all of what there is to experience of God. Do we want a fresh outpouring of God?”

Participant seventeen wrote: “I have been thinking about last week. What really touched me was (person in wheelchair) wanting to pray for someone’s knee. From the outside looking in you would expect the other person to be praying for (person in wheelchair). But that was not the case. Maybe I believe more in developing a loving environment than healing through prayer.”

Researcher Journal Reflections

The participants seemed to be moved by the message of Tom Jones about being “hungry” for God. The researcher understood Jones to mean that every believer should have a deep desire for God, a desire to know God and to live a life of obedience. The researcher was struck by the candor of the participants in admitting that they were not satisfied with their current level of consecration to Jesus. This issue is at the heart of

Christian life and affects all areas of life, not just healing. Following Jesus in America can often be casual. There has been little or no persecution. It is tempting to approach God with the same consumer mentality that we apply to the rest of life. The cost of discipleship is not something we are very familiar with. It would be surprising if this casual approach to God does not have effect upon divine healing ministry.

The researcher recalls that Randy Clark has mentioned numerous times of extended fasting, particularly when certain diseases have not seemed to respond to healing prayer. The researcher recalls the incident in Mark 9 where the disciples failed to cast out an unclean spirit that prevented a child from speaking and hearing. Jesus took over and removed the demon. The disciples then asked Jesus why they were unable to drive out the spirit. Jesus said, “This kind can come out only through prayer.” In view of these things, it should not be surprising that hunger for God and effectiveness in healing ministry are connected. This is not to say that healing is fundamentally the result of some attribute of the person praying. Paul clearly states in 1 Corinthians 12 that healing is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. A gift is not something earned.

Training Event-Week Four

The researcher played a video produced by Global Awakening which consisted of individuals who gave testimony of physical healings in meetings led by Randy Clark.⁴ In most cases the person who laid hands on the sick or injured was a layperson rather than Clark himself. The researcher wanted training course participants to witness that divine healing can occur through the ministry of any follower of Jesus. This contradicts the

⁴ *Thirteen Weeks of Faith*, DVD-ROM (Mechanicsburg, PA: Global Awakening, 2014).

stereotype that divine healing only takes place through the ministry of a small number of persons who have a rare gift of healing. In the video, testimonies described healing from blindness, deafness, multiple sclerosis, cancer and pain from metal implanted during surgery after accidents.

The researcher pointed out that when Clark prayed for someone, a prayer of command was often used directing pain to leave or a part of the body to be made whole. This was the form of prayer which is often recorded in the gospels as the method which Jesus used. In Mark 1 Jesus says to the leper, "Be clean!" In Mark 2 Jesus tells the paralytic, "Get up, take your mat and go home!" In Mark 3 Jesus says to the man with the withered hand, "Stretch out your hand!" These incidents are typical of Jesus' healing ministry. The command form of prayer is also used by the apostles. Acts 2 records that Peter said this to the crippled man at the Beautiful gate of the temple: "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk!" The researcher admitted being somewhat uncomfortable using command prayer, but wanted to follow the model used by Jesus and the apostles.

Participant Discussion

In response to the teaching on command prayer, participant two said that there was no reason to be reticent in healing ministry and that we should use the name of Jesus with confidence.

Participant eight prayed for a man at a local drug and alcohol rehabilitation center. The man expressed concern about anxiety. After prayer, the man felt at peace. The participant commented on the severe conditions that were healed in the Global

Awakening video and wondered, “Do I lack confidence in God? Am I letting God down if they are not healed?”

Participant ten remembered a time last year when his heart condition was prayed for at CFCF. The heart condition did not seem to change but the participant felt uplifted.

In response to the video, participant nine said, “Seeing God’s power is amazing! I don’t think about it in my normal day.”

Participant seven said that it was important to stay connected to Jesus in order that the person praying knows how to pray.

Journal Writing

Participant four asked several questions in the journal. For example, “What is an anointing?” The researcher had used this term in describing parts of the video. This participant also wondered if there are degrees of gifting regarding gifts of the Holy Spirit. The researcher had suggested that individuals might have the same spiritual gift (healing, for example) but have different levels of effectiveness in ministering that gift. This participant wondered what it means to have the gift of healing. The researcher had suggested that some believers do have such a gift. The participant also asked, “Is there something I need to do to put myself in a position to receive the gift of healing?” The participant noted, “If we don’t pray, nothing will happen. Always better to pray.”

Participant eight wrote: “When God heals, it builds one’s faith. Watching those testimonies chokes me up! What an awesome God we serve!”

Participant two wrote:

Speak to the condition. Imperatives. Speak in Jesus’ name. The disciples in Acts repeatedly commanded, gave commands to both

conditions and spirits. We are up against violent forces. We will almost always see more healings outside of the church, among unbelievers. God knows that His mercy and power will lead the unbelievers to repentance. We are too timid in allowing God to work. Be confident and courageous in the power of the Creator of the universe. Thank God for any healing He provides, whether it's 10%, 20%...50%. If He works (or even if He doesn't) He deserves praise and glory. At the pool of Bethesda, there were many sick and crippled, but Jesus went to a single specific man. We too often are scared of what if they aren't healed. Will I give God a bad name? Misrepresent Him? But if we don't pray, no one is healed. Do we feel safer/more comfortable/more confident if we don't step out in faith?

Participant seven wrote:

Speaking to the infirmity in the name of Jesus is NOT telling God what to do. Jesus didn't intercede when He healed people. He spoke to the condition. The disciples did the same thing. Demonic realm—always command with authority. There is opposition to the kingdom that needs to be addressed. You will see more healing outside the church than in it. Jesus was always hearing from the Father while He was ministering. He only did what the Father told him to do. We are not generating that Life. We have to stay connected. I want to have Randy Clark's anointing so that I can go heal sick children in places where there is no hope, probably some impoverished part of South America.

Participant ten wrote:

When we tell someone to heal, we are speaking to the condition. We are not telling God what to do! When praying for a person to be healed, we are in a partnership with God. Wow! Even partial healing deserves praise to God. A person does not have to be a believer to be healed. God loves us all. If a person is not ready to be healed, will they be denied?

Participant six wrote:

It's not telling God what to do when we tell a sickness, injury, pain etc. to leave. We are speaking to that sickness, injury etc. through or by the power of God. See Matthew 10:12: Violent men take it (kingdom) by force. We need, when preparing to pray for someone, to listen to God's Spirit regarding what we should do for the person (i.e. what the problem is, how to pray/command etc.). Jesus modeled that! Don't put God in a

box! God may heal someone right away or it may take time. Some people have a stronger gift than others and may be able to pray for a shorter amount of time over someone. We sometimes think, 'I don't have enough faith to believe in God's healing.' It's not usually about that but, even if it is that (lack of faith) we have to realize it is wrapped up in God's grace which is not dependent upon anything except God's grace, we can't work hard enough, obtain enough merit for it, all we have or ever will have from God is because of His grace.

Participant eleven wrote:

Healing is not one dimensional. A format is not needed. It is the connection to the person doing the healing. Not every experience is the same. It is up to the person praying to be in communication with God to know what God wants for each individual that requests healing. Praise to God after the healing is just as important as the healing itself.

Participant sixteen wrote:

Testimonies build faith. Commands given in prayer aren't to God; they are towards the affliction. Command the evil spirits (what happened in the bible). You'll see more healings outside the church than inside. People who are outside the church are more open to healings. For whatever reason, people inside the church put God in a smaller box more often. They're not as desperate. People who are outside the church are much more desperate because they have nothing to hold onto. They're willing to try whatever works because they want it that badly. People inside the church have gotten too caught up with the unimportant church stuff—they've lost focus on God. The power isn't in the shouting; it's in Jesus' name. If we don't pray, nothing will happen. We'll feel safe, but that's not what God is worried about.

Researcher Journal Reflections

During this training session the researcher made comments about the experience of Randy Clark in praying for non-Christians. In 1986 Clark resigned from one church and moved to St. Louis to plant another church. Clark began a job working in eighty grocery stores. Whenever Clark encountered a fellow employee who was sick or injured,

he offered to pray for them. Most of the employees were not Christians, yet not a single person refused Clark's offer to pray for their healing. Clark discovered that more people were healed in the grocery stores than had been healed in churches. The reader who wants more detail on Clark's perspective should consult chapters one and four of *The Essential Guide to Healing*.

Based on decades of Randy Clark's experience in healing ministry, the researcher had commented to the participants that they would probably see more people healed outside of churches than inside. This is a sad state of affairs. What could be a cause? Clark has suggested that cessationism in the church has made it difficult for many believers to receive divine healing ministry. Non-Christians have generally not been exposed to this teaching and are more open to the supernatural.

One reason the researcher showed this video was for the participants to see testimonies of recovery from serious conditions such as blindness, deafness, multiple sclerosis, and cancer. Participants may not have heard cases of healing from these afflictions and may not have thought it possible. It should be noted that when Pentecostals/charismatics talk about healing from blindness and deafness they do not necessarily mean that the person had no sight whatsoever or absolutely no hearing. Often Pentecostals/charismatics will say a person is healed when the person testifies to some improvement in sight or hearing.

Another reason the researcher wanted the participants to see this video was out of conviction that testimonies of healing build faith in the listener. Once a listener hears that it is possible for someone to be healed of a particular disease or condition, the listener is more likely to be willing to pray for someone with that same disease or condition. The

principle is this: What God has done for one person might be done for another. Serious ailments can be intimidating for the person who wants to pray for the sick. They may never have heard of God touching an individual with such a serious affliction. The researcher hoped that the video would enlarge the range of possibilities in the minds of the participants. Testimonies are also very valuable for the sick or injured person who is seeking healing. A testimony of healing may enable the person to see themselves as a candidate for healing. The researcher has heard Bill Johnson tell numerous accounts of being in healing meetings where a testimony was shared about the healing of a specific condition. Sometimes a listener with the same condition has been healed without receiving prayer from anyone.

Training Event-Week Five

The researcher made a comment in the week four session, saying that some people have stronger healing gifts than others. For example, Randy Clark, Heidi Baker, and Bill Johnson see healings occur more frequently than most ministries, and more often witness healings of serious conditions such as cancer. One participant posed the question, “Where does the Bible talk about degrees of gifting?” The researcher suggested Romans 12:3 as a text to consider. Paul says, “Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.” This text suggests that individuals receive different measures of faith from God. Two persons might have the same gift (healing, for example) but exercise it with different levels of faith.

In the week four session the researcher made reference to “the anointing.” A participant asked for a definition. The researcher gave a general definition of “the presence of God which enables someone to minister with power in a particular situation.” The researcher offered two texts as possible illustrations of the anointing or lack thereof. Luke 5 describes an occasion when Jesus healed the paralytic who was lowered through the roof. Luke 5:17 notes, “And the power of the Lord was present for him to heal the sick.” This suggests that the power of the Lord to heal the sick may not have been perpetually present even in the life of Jesus. One might say that the anointing was present on that day. On the other hand, Mark 6 records the visit of Jesus to Nazareth when his neighbors took offense at him. Mark 6:5-6 says, “He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. And he was amazed at their lack of faith.” The text may suggest that the anointing was less strong on this occasion than on other days.

In the week four session the researcher referred to the gift of healing. A participant asked, “What does it mean to have the gift of healing?” The researcher pointed to 1 Corinthians 12 which says that the Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts to individuals and that everyone does not receive the same gift. This suggests that an individual may be considered to have a gift of healing and is able to manifest this ability more often or with greater power than other believers. At the same time, Mark 16:17 says, “”And these signs will accompany those who believe.” The text proceeds to identify healing as one gift that would be typical for believers in general. Mark 16 suggests that healing gifts are broadly distributed in the body of Christ and that healing gifts are not limited to a few individuals.

A participant asked, “Is there something I need to do to put myself in a position to receive a healing gift?” The researcher said the answer might be no and yes. If, according to 1 Corinthians 12, gifts are sovereignly distributed by the Holy Spirit, it would appear that one does not have any voice in what gifts one receives. I Corinthians 12:11 says, “All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.” And 1 Corinthians 12:30 states, “Do all have gifts of healing?” The expected answer in this passage is no. On the other hand, 1 Corinthians 12:32 says, “But eagerly desire the greater gifts.” This suggests that the desire of an individual for a particular gift is significant and that God may be responsive.

The video presentation in the week five session was a lecture by Randy Clark on the relationship between acts of obedience and healing as found in the Gospel of John.⁵ The participants watched Clark discuss three miracles in John: John 2 (water turned into wine), John 4 (the official’s son healed at Capernaum), and John 5 (crippled man healed at the pool of Bethesda). Clark analyzed John 4:48, “Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders, you will never believe.” Rather than commentary on weak faith, Clark suggested that Jesus’ word to the man was not criticism at all but merely an observation about the necessity of signs and wonders in producing faith in Jesus. After all, the whole structure of John’s gospel is the account of seven miracles. John explains the purpose of the seven miracle narratives in John 20:30-31: “Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”

⁵ *Kingdom Foundations: A School of Healing and Impartation*, DVD-ROM (Mechanicsburg, PA: Global Awakening, 2012), disc 22.

Journal Writing

Participant two commented that the key verse in John 2 was Mary's instructions to the servants: "Do whatever he tells you." The obedience of the servants was a prerequisite to the miracle. Participant two wrote: "God still speaks today. Faith begins with God speaking and involves us responding in obedience and persevering under obstacles." In John 4 the official apparently thought that it was necessary for Jesus to arrive in person to heal his son. The official begged Jesus to come. Instead, Jesus told the official to go. Participant two wrote "Obedience was in how the man trusted Jesus even though Jesus didn't do what the man requested."

Regarding John 2, participant eighteen wrote:

Faith begins with God speaking and faith is responding to that word with an act of obedience, 100% obedience." About John 4, this participant wrote: "His act of obedience was taking Jesus at his word." Regarding John 5, this person wrote: "He was healed when he was obedient (either before or after Jesus spoke). Faith is spelled R-I-S-K. There needs to be a word from God to precede the R-I-S-K." As reflection on week five, participant eighteen wrote: "Can we really be followers of Jesus if we don't risk things? The risk may be great, but the reward will be greater. It's so hard to risk, but so worth it. If we're hearing from God, but aren't willing to take the risk, is it even worth following Jesus? Faith and actions are inseparable. You can't truly have one without the other.

Responding to the account of the servants in John 2, participant seven wrote:

"They had to obey something that didn't make sense. It doesn't have to make sense in the natural. Healing has nothing to do with the natural." As reflection on week five, participant seven wrote, "I never looked at the gospel of John in this light, but it totally resonates with me and with what I have experienced over the past 3-4 years. I knew God

spoke and worked this way—with signs and wonders, etc., but I didn’t necessarily have all the Scripture to back up what I’ve experienced.”

In response to Clark’s teaching, participant four wrote: “Each case seemed to involve people who were more than somewhat concerned, but really were desperate for the touch and power of God. Perhaps level of hunger/desperation is a major factor to hearing from God and what He wants to tell you.”

Participant nine wrote: “Does God not heal only due to lack of faith from either party, or does He not heal at times simply because the healing doesn’t serve His purpose? Would more faith necessarily change the result? Wouldn’t the Lord be able to use a person to further His kingdom to the same degree whether or not he was healed?”

Participant ten wrote: “It’s hard to believe that a person must believe to be healed. It seems like God would be more generous.”

Researcher Journal Reflections

The researcher was very interested in the comments of the participants in relation to healing and obeying God. The researcher has pastoral interaction with the participants and is aware of them taking risks when God has spoken to them. One participant had a dream in which three children appeared whom the dreamer sensed would become part of the family. The participant later recognized the children when viewing a database of children available for adoption in another country. Although the process was filled with hurdles, the participant eventually adopted those children. It is not surprising that this participant should be bold in praying for the sick. Faith is necessary in obeying God.

The researcher was intrigued by the comment of participant ten wishing that God would heal people even when they lack faith. This participant is a very merciful person and the comment is consistent with a heart of compassion. It seems that faith is a fundamental element necessary for interaction with the living God. Healing is not the only area in which faith is a factor. Faith is necessary for salvation. John 1:12 comes to mind: “But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God.” Hebrews 11:6 also speaks about the importance of faith: “And without faith it is impossible to please God, for whoever would approach him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.”

Participant nine suggested that faith is not the only factor in whether or not a person is healed. This participant thought that God may choose not to heal some people because of other considerations. The researcher is reminded that A.B. Simpson, the founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, believed that a person could expect healing until the time when one’s divinely determined lifespan was finished. This participant wondered: “Wouldn’t the Lord be able to use a person to further His kingdom to the same degree whether or not he was healed?” The researcher recalls that Paul praised Timothy as a highly effective worker, yet Timothy experienced frequent illnesses according to 1 Timothy 1:22. In 2 Timothy 4:20 Paul comments that Trophimus was left behind at Miletus because of illness in spite of the fact that Paul had performed many miracles.

The researcher noticed that the issue of hunger for God was raised again by a participant. Participant four suggested that desperation is a “major factor” in hearing from God. The researcher believes that this participant identified something of great

importance. In Matthew 6:33 Jesus directs believers to seek the kingdom of God first. Jesus exhorts believers to ask, search and knock in Matthew 7:7. The followers of Jesus are not to assume an indifferent posture.

Training Event-Week Six

In this session, the researcher dealt with the ability of believers to oppose evil through the name of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit. This power was conferred on the followers of Jesus in Luke 10:19: “I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.” Specifically, the class looked at the ministry of delivering people from the oppression of evil spirits. The class watched the video *Father of Lights* in which an evangelist in India (Ravi) goes to visit a witch doctor.⁶ The witch doctor was rumored to have caused the death of a local pastor and his wife. When the evangelist asks to speak to the witch doctor, the witch refuses to come out of his house. The evangelist prays for the village and invites the Holy Spirit to come and take dominion over the village. The witch doctor becomes blind and expresses fear of the evangelist. The witch doctor’s wife engages the evangelist in conversation and he offers to pray for her. .

Next, the class watched the video *Furious Love* which recorded the experience of a young American woman who was chosen at birth to become a bride of Satan by an occult group.⁷ In the video the young woman was called Esther. Esther became afraid for her life and sought the help of a minister, Angela, who had experience in deliverance.

⁶ *Father of Lights*, DVD-ROM (Elgin, IL: Wanderlust Productions, 2012).

⁷ *Furious Love*, DVD-ROM (Elgin, IL: Wanderlust Productions, 2010).

Esther recounted part of her encounter with Angela: “Light was piercing into my soul! I couldn’t look into her eyes anymore. They (the demons within her) didn’t want to look into her eyes anymore. It took like twenty minutes (for the demons to be cast out). I said the sinner’s prayer. She asked the Holy Spirit to fill me. The church has to wake up. We are involved in a war.”

Participant Discussion

Participant five’s reaction to the evangelist was that he was polite with the witch doctor and his wife. Participant two said, “God is able to take over any place He wants, but He waits for us.” Participant two seemed to be saying that it is necessary for the followers of Jesus to actively exercise the authority which Jesus has given.

Participant ten commented on the boldness of Angela in confronting the demons.

The researcher gave each class member an instructional card from Global Awakening entitled Prayer for Deliverance. The researcher reviewed the following basic steps:

Give the individual priority.

If a spirit manifests, make it be quiet.

Establish and maintain communication with the person.

Ask the person what he or she wants freedom from.

Make sure the person has accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Interview the person to discover the event(s) or relationship(s) that have led to the bondage(s).

Lead the person in closing the door(s) through which the spirit(s) entered.

Cast out the unclean spirit(s) in the name of Jesus.

Have the person thank Jesus for his or her deliverance.

Have the person ask the Holy Spirit to fill him or her and all the places formerly occupied by the evil spirits.

Journal Writing

Participant five wrote:

I've had quite a few talks in the last few weeks about deliverances. This was refreshing and the info I was looking for. I've been wondering if a person who's accepted the Holy Spirit could be affected by a demonic stronghold. Then Ravi talked about the witch doctor putting a curse on the pastor. I wish this class was longer so I could learn more about handling these situations. I feel these things happen much closer to home than we think. Canal Fulton has roots in Freemasonry and it makes me wonder about the warfare happening outside in our parking lot. Also, I've had questions about the baptism of the Holy Spirit and if it happens once we're saved. This class confirmed the conclusions I came to. I'm very thankful.

Participant nineteen said:

I've recently been thinking a lot about boldness and authority through Christ. Like with Ravi and Angela, they did not have a spirit of fear, they were bold and authoritative. I think this is the confident and bold hope that the Bible talks about. I think the hope we have in Christ is the power and authority that He gives us along with grace and forgiveness.

Participant two said:

We are in partnership with God when we say that we want to follow Him. That partnership includes reclaiming objects and dominions on earth in the name of Jesus—allowing His kingdom to come and His will to be done. Be respectful and love people. Satan is powerful. We can't underestimate the power of darkness. But that means it's that much more crucial that we invite the power of God into a place. We can NOT do these miracles and deliverances in our own human power.

Participant eighteen said: “People have to want deliverance. If they don’t want help, then you can’t help them. God honors our sovereignty because we have our own authority.”

Participant seven said:

God has been showing me over the past couple of years glimpses of what is happening in the supernatural. And we’ve had some demonic encounters in our adoption process, so this is interesting and important to me. I feel like I don’t know enough about deliverance, and I want to know more. God is showing me what is happening in the demonic realm, and I don’t know what I am supposed to do with that.

Researcher Journal Reflection

The topic of the demonic realm is a foreign concept for most North American Christians. Strange behavior and compulsions are rarely attributed to evil spiritual forces. Instead, medical professionals and clergy alike consider deeply troubled people always to be victims of mental illness rather than demons. The researcher does not deny that mental illness is real and that medication can help many who suffer from it. Nevertheless, the researcher recalls stories told by Francis MacNutt about demonized people who were turned away by pastors and priests who did not believe the accounts told by victims of oppression. This is a result of the modern materialist worldview that denies the existence of the supernatural. The researcher is reminded of Rudolf Bultmann’s famous comment that the person who enjoys the technological benefits of modern science cannot continue to believe in the world of angels and demons. In fact, Bultmann was mistaken. Science does not nullify the existence of the supernatural realm.

The researcher has been influenced by the deliverance ministry of Pablo Bottari in Argentina. Bottari was a barber who became involved in the evangelistic crusades of

Carlos Annacondia. Bottari began to help minister to crusade attendees who manifested demons. Eventually Bottari became the leader of the deliverance ministry at these crusades. Bottari claims to have participated in 30,000 cases in which people were freed from evil spirits. If there is this much demonic activity in Argentina, why should North Americans and Europeans be immune from demonic influence? The researcher speculates that demonic oppression is common here also but goes undetected. The demonic realm is a joke to North Americans. Children and adults wear costumes of devils and witches for Halloween, and many of them attend churches and see no contradiction.

The researcher has witnessed few cases of demonization firsthand, but the experiences have been powerful. The first incident was in Japan decades ago where the researcher's family planted a church along with another American family. During a baptism service at a seaside beach, a pastor insisted that the candidates for baptism renounce all ties to Satan. One of the candidates was unable to do so and began growling like an animal. The spirit was commanded to leave the candidate and then the candidate was able to renounce Satan and proceed with baptism. The second incident occurred about four years ago when the researcher participated in a Global Awakening trip to Brazil led by Randy Clark. Clark and the team held meetings in two churches. People were invited to receive salvation and healing through Jesus. The researcher prayed for a young man who wanted freedom from alcoholism, drug addiction, and sexual addiction. The man also complained of being cursed by extended family members. When the researcher began to pray in the name of Jesus against these afflictions, the man fell to the ground and began to scream. The reaction caused the researcher to conclude that this was a case of demonic influence. When the researcher commanded the spirit to leave in the

name of Jesus, the man suddenly stopped screaming and appeared to fall unconscious. After about twenty minutes the man rose and seemed to be at peace.

The researcher thinks there is a difference between demonic possession and demonic oppression. MacNutt and Bottari suggest that most people who are affected by evil spirits are oppressed but not possessed. That is to say that it is more common for demons to hinder and trouble people than it is for demons to completely control them. Bottari says that it is rare for a person's will to be completely overwhelmed by a spirit.

Training Event-Week Seven

The researcher began this session by showing a video of a message by Randy Clark entitled *Spend and Be Spent*⁸. The title of the message was taken from the Apostle Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 12:15: "I will most gladly spend and be spent for you." Clark emphasized the need for followers of Jesus to have the Holy Spirit's power in order for the good news of Jesus to reach the world. Clark said, "You don't need the baptism of the Holy Spirit if you just want to be a good person." Clark referred to John Wesley who urged the Methodists never to stop their emphasis on the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Clark described the powerful effect which the Holy Spirit had upon the Moravians. From 1517 to the early 1700's, according to Clark, all the Protestant groups together sent only about 100 missionaries. Zinzendorf started a prayer meeting in which the Holy Spirit fell on 300 people. This experience resulted in the Moravians sending more missionaries than previously sent by the entire Protestant movement. In conclusion, Clark insisted that

⁸ *Kingdom Foundations: A School of Healing and Impartation*, DVD-ROM (Mechanicsburg, PA: Global Awakening, 2012), disc 5.

people from most of today's non-Christian cultures do not convert unless they first see signs and wonders. Clark claimed that 80% of Christians south of the Equator have had a Pentecostal experience and that this high percentage was true in China as well. After the message, Clark ministered to the listeners by impartation. This consisted of Clark laying hands on any interested individuals and inviting the Holy Spirit to fill them.

After showing the video, the researcher invited those in attendance at the healing training course to consider participating in a time of impartation. Everyone expressed a desire to do so, and the researcher and members of the course placed their hands on each one in turn and invited the Holy Spirit to fill them and to impart spiritual gifts to them. The participants also completed a post-course survey.

Participant Discussion

Participant thirteen related two experiences related to divine healing ministry. This person had experienced a deep bruise from an injury which later resulted in a blood clot. The clot was successfully removed through surgery, but the patient was informed that damage had been done to the heart. Doctors considered EKG results to be abnormal and directed the patient to see a cardiologist. This participant requested prayer for healing during the healing course and was prayed for by class members. The participant did see a cardiologist and was happy to be informed that there was nothing wrong with the heart and no further care was needed.

Participant thirteen went camping at a state park some weeks after the conclusion of the healing course and encountered a man who reported pain in his back and hip. Participant thirteen prayed for the ailing man and the man reported a sensation like a hot

poker in the back area. The man said there was no more pain and went to work the next day.

Journal Writing

Participant six wrote:

I just returned from a mission trip (11 days) in Managua, Nicaragua. While there I was eager for opportunities to pray for people for healing. Our team was made up primarily of high school students (16) on their senior mission trip; they attend Kingsway Christian School in Orrville, Ohio. Our first opportunity came in our first full day of ministering, in this case, to a group of fifty or so senior citizens. After the team shared in music, drama and testimonies, we provided a meal and some toiletries. I addressed the group and asked if any of them would like to be prayed for healing. About $\frac{3}{4}$ responded so the team spread out and prayed for as many people as we had time for. Unfortunately our schedule was tight but I'd say I prayed for five people and several others of our team prayed for several people each plus some prayed over the whole group of senior citizens. Although I was able to generally use the five-step prayer guidelines it was complicated by the time constraints and the language barriers. I did have a translator for several of the people I prayed for. Several days later we had the opportunity to pray for a woman age 35 who had been unable to walk since birth. A group of about five of us prayed over her. She seemed emotionally moved by our prayers and yet troubled in spirit. I asked through our interpreter if there was anything in her heart that was troubling her (trying to explore that maybe there was some kind of spiritual issues involved. Given she was crippled from birth that didn't seem likely but I still sensed there was something else going on there.) We hoped to pray for her when we returned several days later. The logistics of that didn't work out however I was able to pray over her again briefly by myself. Our trip organizers felt moved to buy her a wheelchair to give her mobility (she had to crawl around her small home/hut on a concrete floor and her knees were badly worn down from that). Although we did not see any immediate results from the Nica people, we prayed for one of our female team members who was having significant back pain on the trip. Several other girls on the team prayed for her; she felt heat as they laid hands on her and she reported that she was healed! Just to mention, after one of our devotional times where we discussed

the lack of expectation by the US church regarding signs and wonders, the team took to praying over our rice and beans distribution that, like Elijah's oil and flour, they would not run out for the people who received them (no word back on that part yet.)

Participant two wrote:

A week or so ago (around 5/20) I had a really bad case of acid reflux after eating some oily food. I only have reflux a few times a year now, and this time was especially painful. It got so bad that I felt I had no other option but to pray. I felt rather silly actually doing it, but I rebuked the acid and pain in Jesus' name. Before praying, I felt the terrible symptoms for a few minutes, but after praying, the reflux was gone in seconds. I have to give God the praise for His healing power! And I want His supernatural working to become more and more natural to me.

Participant one wrote:

Healing is not necessarily contingent on the level of faith for the person being healed. Healing may be more contingent on the level of faith of the persons praying for the person to be healed. When we approach a person to be healed we are to expect something to happen to that person. We should be direct, specific and concise in our petitions to God. I would like to study more about healing. I would like to pray specifically for the healing of others. I would also like to study more about casting out demons from others.

Researcher Journal Reflections

The researcher was grateful for the experience of participant thirteen who requested prayer for healing after being informed by doctors that an EKG was abnormal. After prayer, the participant saw a cardiologist who reported that the heart was normal and required no intervention. This result was very encouraging to participant thirteen and to those who prayed. This participant was bold in offering divine healing prayer, even in public places.

The researcher was very interested in the experience of participant six while leading a group of high school students on a mission trip in Nicaragua. It appeared that

the young people were quite open to pray for the sick whenever opportunity arose. This was true even though the researcher expects that few of the students attend Pentecostal/charismatic churches. The researcher suspects that the students were probably more open to divine healing ministry than adults might have been (adults from the same families and churches). Of course, this is merely speculation since there were few adults on the trip (only trip leaders and chaperones) with whom the teenagers might be compared. In any case, the researcher is convinced that North American culture is shifting from a mostly modern worldview to a post-modern worldview in which the supernatural is more acceptable. The researcher anticipates that each new generation of North Americans will likely be more receptive to the supernatural than preceding generations. This is not all good. The researcher expects that new generations will be more open to occult beliefs and practices as well as more open to divine healing ministry and other gifts of the Holy Spirit. In the researcher's experience, each generation of North Americans seems to be less and less familiar with the Bible. As a result, the ability to distinguish between Holy Spirit manifestations and demonic manifestations is probably declining steadily. In any case, the researcher believes that the influence of cessationism is declining within the Christian community of North America. The researcher considers this good news. Word and Spirit have been divorced for too long in the churches of North America and Europe. It is time for them to be reunited once again as they were in the first century. The gospel was always intended to be something more than a verbal message. The message must be accompanied by healing and deliverance.

Comparison of Pre-Course Survey and Post-Course Survey

As discussed in chapter four of this study, the research project consisted of a training course in divine healing ministry. The researcher's hypothesis was that such a training course would cause participants to pray for the sick more often and that they would be better equipped to do so. The researcher used a qualitative approach for the project and stated that the focus would not be on collecting numerical data. Instead, the focus was on capturing the experience of the participants through discussion and writing. Nevertheless, the researcher did include several questions on the pre-course survey and the post-course survey which asked for numerical responses. The purpose was to have some data which could be compared to the comments of the participants.

Both the pre-course survey and the post-course survey posed this question to the participants: "On a scale of 1-10, how well equipped do you feel to pray for the sick?" Nine of ten participants said that they were better equipped to pray for the sick, but the increase in perceived ability was not great. One participant said there was no change. Four participants reported a ten percent increase. Two participants reported a twenty percent increase. Three participants reported a forty percent increase. Thus, on average, the increase was twenty percent increase in perceived ability per participant. This is a small increase in perceived ability to pray for healing and did not seem surprising to the researcher in view of the brevity of the course and the nature of the context.

Both the pre-course survey and the post-course survey posed this question to the participants: "In the past 60 days, how many times have you prayed for the sick with laying on of hands?" The activity level of participants in praying for the sick was static for the majority. Two participants reported that they did not pray for healing for anyone

outside of the class either prior to the training course or during the training course. Two participants reported praying for the same number of people prior to the training course and during the training course. Two participants reported a slight increase in praying for the sick. One of those reported praying for a single person prior to the training course and two people during the course. The other reported praying for two people prior to the training and three afterward. Four participants reported praying for at least twice as many people during the training course as they did prior to the training. Participant six reported praying for five people prior to the training course and fifteen people during the training. Participant seven reported praying for five people prior to the training and ten people during the training. Participant eight reported praying for no one prior to the training and five people during the training. Participant thirteen reported praying for two people prior to the training and ten people during the course. These four participants accounted for almost all the increase in activity.

It appeared to the researcher that the four participants whose activity in healing prayer noticeably increased were all interested in divine healing ministry before the course. Three of these four participants reported a level of six or higher (on a scale of one to ten) in prior experience before the training course. The researcher believes the training course had the strongest effect on those who were already motivated to practice divine healing ministry. As senior pastor of Canal Fulton Christian Fellowship, the researcher has a relationship with all the participants and the response of three of these four participants was not surprising.

In general the pre-course and post-course surveys show that the effect of the training course was that most of the participants felt they were slightly better equipped to

pray for the sick after the course, but that only a minority (four of ten participants) prayed for the sick more often during the duration of the training. The researcher's impression was that the training course had a limited effect on the healing practices of the majority of the participants. Still, a minority of participants did report increased healing activity.

Despite the modest quantitative effect of the training course in divine healing ministry, the researcher was not discouraged about the results of the research project. The setting of the project was a local church in which healing ministry was unfamiliar for more than twenty years. Many church members still regard healing ministry as foreign. From the start, the project was regarded as a qualitative study. The researcher proposed that the essence of the research would not necessarily be reflected by quantitative numerical data, but by the qualitative responses of the participants. The researcher was pleased that participants were willing to consider healing ministry when it was not part of their previous Christian experience.

The discussions and journal writing indicated to the researcher that the participants had thoughtfully considered aspects of divine healing ministry, many for the first time. They discussed whether or not healing ministry was valid today. They were exposed to a five-step prayer model and reflected on the importance of expressing gratitude to God for any actual healing. They grasped the need to be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit while praying. They discussed the importance of not blaming the sick person when healing did not appear to take place. They reflected on the principle that divine healing is not an equation to be solved but an overflow of relationship with Jesus. Participants commented on the importance of hunger for God as a foundation for

healing ministry and for Christian life in general. They considered the importance of being bold in healing prayer, using prayers of command as Jesus did. The participants gave praise to God after viewing recorded testimonies of healing. They discussed healing and other gifts of the Holy Spirit and talked about whether they should seek such gifts. Participants reflected on the importance of obedience to God when praying for divine healing. They talked about the authority of the believer in delivering people from the influence of demonic spirits. They learned about the reality of impartation of the Holy Spirit's power and of spiritual gifts and ministered to one another. The researcher was grateful for the opportunity to introduce the participants to such aspects of the kingdom of God.

Given the non-charismatic orientation of the Christian and Missionary Alliance denomination and of Canal Fulton Christian Fellowship (the local church), the researcher had not been certain that there would be sufficient participation to even do such a study. The researcher was pleased that nineteen individuals joined the course for at least one session. Only ten of those people came to enough sessions to justify completing a pre-course and post-course survey, but the researcher was glad for them to have even a little exposure to divine healing ministry.

Randy Clark informed the researcher that, in his experience, The Christian and Missionary Alliance was one of the more resistant church groups in America to the ministry of divine healing. Given the context, the researcher was grateful to find the participants to be as engaged as they were. The researcher considered the research project to be one step in a long journey. The researcher has been encouraging divine healing ministry for over eight years in this local church context. Receptivity of this ministry at

Canal Fulton Christian Fellowship has been slow to develop. In the mind of the researcher, slow progress is better than no progress. The researcher's role as senior pastor means this is a long-term relationship with the participants. As pastor, the researcher hopes to influence the participants in many ways toward divine healing long after the project is finished.

CHAPTER SIX

REFLECTION AND CONCLUSION

It is possible that the researcher learned as much from the healing training course as the participants. Of course, this may be true for teachers in any setting and should not be surprising. The researcher has heard numerous teachers refer to this phenomenon. The Doctor of Ministry program has strengthened the researcher's ability to practice divine healing ministry. In August 2013 at one of the intensive sessions at United Theological Seminary, the researcher rode in a shuttle van from the hotel to the seminary campus. While talking to the van driver, the researcher learned that the driver suffered from pain in the neck and back due to arthritis. The researcher offered to pray for healing from arthritic pain and the driver agreed. After about ten minutes of prayer, the driver reported that the pain was gone. The researcher saw the van driver again at the next intensive in January 2014 at United Theological Seminary. The driver reported continued freedom from pain. In January 2014 the researcher encountered another shuttle van driver who mentioned pain in his hands from arthritis. The researcher and another Randy Clark scholar prayed for the driver who later reported less pain. The driver also talked about sorrow at the death of a son during a crime. The second United Theological Seminary student, a counselor, asked the Holy Spirit to minister emotional healing to the driver. The researcher probably would have been hesitant to pray for either of these drivers in a

public setting except for the influence of Dr. Randy Clark and Dr. Jon Ruthven, mentors in the Doctor of Ministry program.

During the course of the researcher studies at United Theological Seminary members of Canal Fulton Christian Fellowship began a ministry to a local drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility. A team from CFCF visits men at the facility once every sixty days to conduct a worship service. As a result of exposure to the healing ministry of Randy Clark during the sessions at Global Awakening, the researcher had faith to offer prayer for divine healing during the services.

On February 21, 2014 the researcher and a team of laypeople from Canal Fulton Christian Fellowship ministered at the drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility. One man reported having severe deformation of the spine from birth and had surgery at age twelve in which metal plates and many screws were inserted. The surgery straightened the spine but the patient suffered constant pain from that time. The patient was given narcotic pain reliever for years and eventually became addicted to heroin. The patient requested prayer from the team on February 21. The researcher was aware of the ministry of Randy Clark in which many individuals with metal implants had gained motion and freedom from pain after prayer for divine healing. Clark's doctoral project at United Theological Seminary was a study of such cases during one year of ministry. Because of familiarity with Clark's success in these cases, the researcher prayed with confidence. After prayer the patient was invited to do something which was not previously possible. The patient was able to pick up a book from the floor even though this had not been possible for years. On June 20, 2014 the researcher saw the patient again at the rehabilitation facility. The patient reported being free from back pain. At the same location on February 21, another

patient requested prayer for numbness in the arm. After prayer the individual said that normal sensation had returned. On June 20, 2014 this individual said that the normal sensation remained. Also on June 21, an individual requested prayer to be healed from dependence on crack cocaine. The addiction had continued for over twenty years. The individual reported feeling greatly strengthened by the prayer time with laying on of hands.

Another example occurred on May 15, 2014 at a district prayer meeting of the researcher's denomination, The Christian and Missionary Alliance. The district superintendent had asked the researcher to be prepared to offer healing prayer to the pastors. Prior to the time of personal ministry, the superintendent had all the pastors spend about thirty minutes in silent prayer. During this period the researcher had eight distinct impressions concerning physical and emotional healing that seemed to be words of knowledge. The impressions were each of short duration. The researcher might have dismissed the impressions except for training by Randy Clark at the peer sessions at Global Awakening in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania. The researcher had attended four of these sessions during the first two years of the D. Min. program. During the training sessions, the researcher observed Clark receive many words of knowledge which led to healing. Also, Clark had related his extensive experience with words of knowledge. This teaching and ministry modeling enabled the researcher to exercise faith and share the impressions with the pastors gathered at the district prayer meeting. After the words of knowledge were shared, the district superintendent advised the pastors that the words of knowledge were accurate based on the superintendent's personal familiarity with the needs of the pastors. The superintendent encouraged the pastors to allow themselves to be

prayed for. One example of a word of knowledge was that someone had an ankle injury as a result of sports. A pastor responded and received prayer. The pastor was conscious of the manifest presence of the Holy Spirit and reported the ankle was feeling much better. Another word of knowledge concerned unnatural curvature of the spine. A pastor responded and received prayer. This pastor reported that the pain was gone from his back.

On June 29, 2014, participants in the divine healing training course requested prayer for three siblings adopted during the past year. The children had spent years in an orphanage overseas and had experienced physical and emotional trauma. One of the children had been seeing dark forms which seemed to threaten and frighten the child. The grandmother of the children also saw one of the dark forms and thought it was demonic. For this reason, the participants (adoptive parents) requested prayer for deliverance. The researcher, the parents, a grandfather, and church elders gathered to pray for the children one by one. The children did not manifest any obvious signs of demonic control, but the researcher commanded all ties to the kingdom of darkness to be broken in the name of Jesus. The researcher cancelled any ungodly vows made on behalf of the children to be broken in the name of Jesus. A week later the family reported that the children had not seen any more dark forms. The grandmother did report that now the two natural children of the family were now having bad dreams and the parents might request prayer for deliverance. During conversation with the grandmother, she reported having trouble with digestive problems related to gluten allergy. The grandfather and the researcher prayed for her.

On July 2, 2014 the researcher took part in a regularly scheduled prayer meeting at Canal Fulton Christian Fellowship. One of the men commented on pain in both knees

On July 2, 2014 the researcher took part in a regularly scheduled prayer meeting at Canal Fulton Christian Fellowship. One of the men commented on pain in both knees and one shoulder. The pain in the knees was estimated as six on a scale of ten. After prayer the level of pain in the knees was reported as three. After further prayer the pain was reported to be gone. When the individual was asked if prayer was wanted for the shoulder pain, prayer was declined with the explanation that the shoulder pain stopped while the knees were being touched.

On October 17, 2014 the researcher prayed for a CFCF member who was experiencing severe pain in the back, hip, and leg. Prior to the pain the member had suffered a period of high stress that lasted for months. First, the researcher prayed for relief of mental/emotional fatigue. The member reported a sensation of discomfort leaving the body through the arms and hands. The member's spouse (who was also in prayer and touching the member) reported a tingling sensation in his body. Next, the researcher prayed for relief from physical pain in the back, hip, and leg. The member reported that the back felt better, but pain remained in the hip. Several days later, the researcher and a staff member prayed again for the CFCF member and the person reported the pain stopped entirely.

During the course of the program, the researcher benefitted personally from the divine healing ministry of teachers and students at United Theological Seminary. Randy Clark gave opportunity at each intensive session and each peer session for the students to receive prayer for impartation of the Holy Spirit. Several times Rolland Baker joined Clark in laying hands upon the students. During the first two years of the program, the researcher experienced substantial emotional and physical drain from ongoing conflict in

the local church, conflict which lasted for years. It is the researcher's testimony that it was largely because of the strength received in these prayer times that the researcher was able to continue ministering in the local church. The researcher was profoundly affected by these impartations of the Holy Spirit and was conscious of renewed energy and faith on each occasion. The researcher can hardly find words to express the gratitude felt for these impartations. Fellow students also offered encouragement and prophetic words pertaining to the researcher's situation. Under such difficult circumstances in the local church, many pastors find themselves unable to continue ministry. The researcher's predecessor at Canal Fulton Christian Fellowship suffered a nervous breakdown after twenty years there and has not returned to pastoral ministry. It is likely that the researcher would have suffered the same result except for the deliverance given by the Holy Spirit through the healing ministry of Randy Clark and others.

This project has opened the understanding of the researcher to see that the possibilities of divine healing ministry are great. In the researcher's local church, community, and denomination, the opportunities are limited only by the degree to which people believe that Jesus is the same today, yesterday and forever. The Holy Spirit is healing the sick around the world wherever Christians believe that miracles have not ceased. The researcher is resolved to encourage divine healing ministry whenever and wherever there are open doors.

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